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Exposing wrong-doings a matter of duty

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad saw it fit to tell reporters that Datuk M. Kayveas was made Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department not because he exposed the abuse of power and corruption in the Ampang Jaya Municipal Council.

Dr Mahathir, announcing a minor Cabinet reshuffle on Tuesday, said Kayveas would be assisting Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Rais Yatim.

Kayveas' move to this ministry is apt because he is a lawyer and the bulk of Rais' work is related to legal matters.

If anyone had thought that Kayveas has had enough of errant local councils, he is quite wrong. The man is incorrigible. He said after his new appointment was announced that he will continue to be watching local councils.

Since he made the public exposure of the MPAJ, there had been mixed response. Many congratulated him.

His exposure led to unrelenting media coverage and had led to the removal of the council's enforcement chief, Kapt (R) Abdul Kuddus Ahmad, and the transfer of its president, Ahmad Kabit.

Kayveas, who is People's Progressive Party president, said he had to rise to the challenge of proving the allegations he made or he would be accused of "simply making noise".

"I merely felt it was my duty to expose these wrongdoings and spoke my mind," he said.

Kayveas is no stranger to the limelight. He raised eyebrows last year when he called on the Government to consider the possibility of giving Bumiputera status to all nonBumiputeras born after Independence.

He had said that if people were sincere in creating a Bangsa Malaysia, non-Bumiputera and Bumiputera should have equal status.

Earlier this year, Kayveas created ripples again, this time among the Indian community when he said Tamil schools should be closed down because it was difficult to develop talent for the country and many were operating under very trying conditions.

He said PPP was of the opinion that there should only be one school system where four languages English, Malay, Tamil and Chinese - are made compulsory subjects.

As far as Kayveas is concerned, he was not shooting his mouth just to make the headlines. Rather, he says, he gives deep thought to any issue before saying something, especially to the media.

"I pondered a lot on the Ampang council matter and decided that something must be done. I had no motives. I was sincere about my views."

He said he had been calling for improvements to be made in the Ampang council for more than a year, but to no avail.

"In fact the council even had the audacity to imply that the ministry mind its own business."

Kayveas said the council was operating without regard for parliamentary Government and did not understand the Constitution nor the Local Government Act.

He said the picture painted was as if the Federal Government could not interfere in the affairs of the council and that it should be left alone.

"I was receiving increasing calls from the public about the Ampang council and how their complaints were not attended to.

"I was even informed that the enforcement chief had presigned notices from the council president and was free to issue them at his own discretion."

Kayveas said when he asked to meet with the officer concerned over the allegations, he was told off rudely and even challenged to prove the allegations.

"Proving corruption is never easy. Sometimes, neither the giver nor recipient want to say anything.

"The officer involved challenged me thinking I would not be able to prove anything.

"I took it as my responsibility and duty to bring this officer to book, for the sake of the public and the reputation of the Government."

Kayveas said he was prepared to go all the way despite getting calls from certain individuals questioning his action.

"I was asked why I had made the Government `look bad' and unnecessarily ruffled feathers.

"If everyone turns a blind eye, then what about the trust and confidence the public have in us.

"You can sweep things under the carpet, but you cannot do this all the time. Sooner or later, the dirt will spill over."

Yes, we haven't heard the last of Kayveas yet.