

Public sector 40% salary rise will hurt others
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I am certain Malaysia's overstuffed civil service is excited over the rumour that Putrajaya is to implement a new pay scheme which will see their salaries jump by as much as 40 percent.

However I am curious where the money is coming from.

Is it from our EPF as the government is mooting extending the retirement age?

This could mean those desiring to retire after reaching 55 and not overstay their welcome as politicians do, cannot withdraw their savings.

If this is not again a populist policy switch which paves the way to bankruptcy, then I do not know what is.

For all the claims of transformation spins and the spending of millions related to it, things in the civil service are not only sluggish, they are overly bloated and immobile.

The bureaucracy, aided and abetted by little Napoleons and Cleopatras is such so that even a low grade personal assistant to a director can manipulate and do disservice in decision making.

I found this out the other day when I called a PA to one of the nation's top civil servants to brief him on a matter so that he could be well versed with it if asked by journalists.

The PA kept stonewalling me.

And as expected when he was asked the question he made a serious error that earned him brickbats.

If the 40 percent materialises and I think it certainly would as it follows the 'I help you and you help me philosophy' of the present administration prior to GE13 very late or early next year, what would happen?

If you think the 40 percent jump is a quick fix to the escalating cost of goods and services you would be sadly mistaken.

On the contrary, prices will immediately skyrocket the moment the official confirmation comes and before Malaysian consumers in the public sector can cash their cheques.

You do not need our spin masters in the civil service to tell you that the pay increases will buffer the civil servants for a spell.

But do spare a thought for the millions who eke out a living and are now striving hard to make ends meet. They will be the hardest hit.

The federal government in their desperate desire to cling to power, should not sacrifice the wellbeing of millions to curry favour from the privileged few.

The millions who will suffer include not just the unemployed, the poor, the marginalised, the single parents, mothers, the special cases, it also includes the retired and even those professionals who are caught in a debt trap and a downward spiralling economy.

And with the double dip recession threatening the US and Europe we cannot but fear its impact here.

And what little hope some of us have at hitting 55 this year to move away from debt and bankruptcy by utilising our savings at the EPF, is also now put in jeopardy if the government unilaterally decides to raise the retirement age.

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