

Voice of the taxpayers
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When Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak presented the Budget 2011 in October, he announced that the Government would enforce the law strictly and aim for comprehensive tax collection.

Not long ago, I received a notice from the Inland Revenue Board (IRB) that they wanted to review my accounts of the past two years. I believe that many taxpayers and companies have received the notice.

I am a law-abiding taxpayer who declares and pay my taxes; because I know that the country needs taxes to support its development, administrative operations, education and a variety of important services. I brought along my documents and receipts to see the tax officer. He was very professional and reviewed my file carefully. The result was that the deduction of some of my medical expenses had to be reduced, a number of charitable donations did not meet the requirements, and hence my tax would be increased.

Paying taxes is the duty of the citizen. I do not want special recognition. But when I was leaving the IRB office, some questions emerged in my heart. Why is it that tax collection is carried out so much quicker than tax rebates? Will the taxes be put to good use? Shouldn't those taxpayers who work hard to earn money enjoy some rebates when paying a certain amount of tax?

Those taxpayers who are earning more than middle-income pay a lot of taxes every year and sometimes suffer more than large companies, as the maximum income tax rate of 27% is higher than 25% of the corporation tax. Private companies also have room for tax evasion, but the salaried class cannot make a false declaration.

In addition to income tax, there is 6% service tax on Astro TV packages and from next year, the service tax is raised from 5% to 6%. Of course, taxpayers are entitled to the Government's low-cost or even free services, including education and health care in government hospitals. But do not foreign workers who do not pay tax, also enjoy these benefits? What is the difference?

Auditor-General's Report every year exposes acts of much waste of public funds. It tends to give us, the taxpayers, psychological imbalance. How could the government answer to the taxpayers if they did not make good use of public funds? I recently attended a government function and witnessed an absurd scene. Each and every one of the group of speakers who went on stage got a souvenir. Why was there a need to spend money on souvenirs for your own people for merely saying a few words?

In addition to waste and fraud, the national debt has increased, and there has been a budget deficit for 14 consecutive years. Officials should really change the way they used money, and not continue to act as if they were parvenus. Some examples of excessive overhead are the new Selangor police headquarters and the Shah Alam district police headquarters which cost RM126 million to build. There are thirteen states and three Federal Territories, how could the Government afford all their developments?

There are many things that can be done by the existing 1.29 million civil servants. There is no need to outsource. But we see increase in the number of civil servants, and drop in personal productivity because the government is using the money to get things done, and not using its employees to reduce the cost of personnel.

Spending without control, the treasury is short of money, so the government tries to collect more taxes and cut benefits. The recent increase in prices of petrol, diesel, sugar and liquefied natural gas will save the government 10 billion ringgit. But the question is how long could this money last?

Now should be the time for the taxpayer to speak up, but would the government hear us? - mysinchew.com

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