

SERVICE WITH A SMILE

Bosses should make unannounced visits at public counters to see their staff at work, says Sidek

By **DEVID RAJAH** and **V.P. SUJATA**

PUTRAJAYA: Counter service staff at ministries, government departments and agencies nationwide had better be on their toes as their top bosses may just drop in to make surprise checks.

The unannounced visits are part of the Government's move to improve counter service and public delivery system.

Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Sidek Hassan said he had advised secretaries-general and heads of departments to make unannounced visits at public counters nationwide.

"This is to gauge what is really happening and how we can further improve. I have visited counters unannounced and have found some to be quite good. It is better to watch

without being known so that we see the people in real action," he said.

Counter service staff are expected to constantly provide quick services and with a smile.

Mohd Sidek said just like many people, he believed that the most important part of service was speed.

"Everyone expects to be served fast, be it at the government departments, banks and even at restaurants. I would rather be served fast with or without a smile rather than not served at all; but the best and ideal service is being fast with a smile," he said.

Mohd Sidek agreed that not all public sector counter services were good and hoped those which needed improvement would buck up to serve the public better.

He was especially impressed with the efficient and quick service provided at the Subang Jaya Municipal

The Star - 27/3/2007



Sidek: 'The best and ideal service is being fast with a smile.'

Council, Employees Provident Fund office in Petaling Jaya and Immigration Department offices.

These agencies, he said, challenged themselves to provide better and faster service, adding that challenges and competition was good and helped towards creating better efficiency.

Mohd Sidek also advised the bosses to try calling their own offices to discover how fast a telephone call was answered as well as how a complaint was taken down.

He said Government servants

should revert to earlier practices of answering telephone calls within three rings as it reflected their efficiency.

"Sometimes I call my office and the phone rings many times before it is picked up or it is not picked up at all.

"This happens especially when the nearby staff does not want to pick up a colleague's phone," he said.

Mohd Sidek, who revealed that he had answered telephone calls that were left ringing, said that everyone should show commitment.

"It will not hurt a person if he or she were to answer an office call and take down a message (even if the colleague is not around)," he said.

In improving services further, Mohd Sidek said it would be good for departments to revisit their Client Charter instead of adorning office walls with them.

The charter, he said, was a promise made to the public by the departments and a promise to themselves.

He said times have changed and improvement with time was vital.