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REPORTS

Dr Mahathir: Graft level in civil service low since PH won GE14

PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the level of corruption among the 1.6 million civil servants has been low since the new government took office.

He said the government had not received many reports on corruption among civil servants since winning the 14th General Election.

“At present, it (corruption level) it is very, very low. We have not really received reports of corruption since the new government took over.

“As you know, in the old government, everyone talked about government corruption.

“In a way, we have succeeded in reducing corruption. But of course, there may be corruption that is undetected,” he said when officiating the Empowering Local Council Convention hosted by the Housing and Local Govern-

ment Ministry at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre.

Present was Housing and Local Government Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin.

He said there were pledges in the Pakatan Harapan manifesto that had yet to be fulfilled.

“This is because the manifesto was done before we took over the government and we didn’t have knowledge and didn’t know the actual condition of the country.

“That’s why the manifesto couldn’t be implemented immediately. It will take time to build an administration that can carry out its duties based on the manifesto.

“If there is a delay, it doesn’t matter, as long as our thinking is on implementing the manifesto.”

Finance Ministry political secretary Tony Pua said the government was looking at ways to curb

corruption in government institutions while ensuring that these entities had enough flexibility to operate in a challenging environment.

Pua — speaking during a panel titled “Trust and Accountability in the Public Sector at the ongoing Public Sector Financial Management Conference 2018”, hosted by the Malaysian Institute of Accountants — said restrictions were needed given that government agencies had been exploited for the benefit of a few during the Barisan Nasional administration.

“In the last three to four years, the previous government had committed to some RM400 billion in infrastructure spending, which was not reflected in the current accounts as projects that will take place in the future.

“(These are) massive projects that are either not needed or can

be undertaken at half the contract price. These are future debt commitments that make no sense and will, if unchecked, put a strain on our economy.”

He said Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng had developed a reputation for being thrifty and concerned about public infrastructure spending.

“While this government is in power, we will ensure that we will curb the previous corruption and not practise any.

“That said, we might not be the ruling government in the next election and that’s fine, as that is how democracy works.

“But we will put steps in now to ensure that these entities will not be further exploited, no matter who the government is.”

One of the first few steps was to explain and be transparent in the government’s reasoning behind any public spending, said Pua.

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