

Performance first
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By Sean Augustin

Merit: Civil servants who excel to be given priority for top positions

Experienced and high-performing civil servants will be given priority for promotions to top positions in the government, despite a new policy that offers such opportunities to outsiders.

This assurance came yesterday from Public Service Department director-general Tan Sri Abu Bakar Abdullah, who stressed that outsiders would only be hired if the situation warranted it.

Even so, he explained, they would be strictly vetted and evaluated.

"This is just a form of preparation. Now that we are reorganising our service scheme, we do not only want to address the current problems but we also want to look at what is needed in the future."

He also said non-civil servants would only be considered should the department conclude that there were no qualified individuals in the civil service.

Abu Bakar was speaking after signing a circular on the New Remuneration Scheme in Public Service (SBPA) here.

He said it was not true that the new system, which takes effect on Jan 1, was created to rid the civil service of underperforming civil servants via an exit policy.

The new system was part of the 2012 Budget. It has created four hierarchies in the civil service: the premier, top management, management and professional, as well as the implementation groups.

Under the SBPA, the salary in "single point" without increment is given to the premier group, while the minimum-maximum wage concept is given to the top management group with an annual increment based on performance.

The SBPA has also prepared a salary schedule for the management and professional group, as well as the implementation group. Now, they are in a three-tier wage system.

All 1.4 million civil servants, including those under the New Pension System (SSB) that was introduced in 1991 before it was replaced with the Malaysian Remuneration Programme (SSM), will be given the choice of whether they want to opt for the SBPA or not.

If they choose to remain in SSB and SSM, they will enjoy the old pension system.

The new scheme will also see a new mechanism used to evaluate employees.

Abu Bakar denied that the new scheme would reduce the number of civil servants.

Instead, he said, it would ensure that the numbers would be better managed based on needs.

"A total of 29,000 positions have been repealed under the SBPA based on six strategies, namely, right-sizing, duplication, realignment, outsourcing, business process re-engineering and revision," Abu Bakar said

He cited the example of 7,000 police officers who were deployed to patrolling the streets from desk duties and their positions filled by civil servants.

Abu Bakar said civil servants who underperformed that they would be reviewed by a special panel from Jan 1, and might be asked to leave if they failed to improve.

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