

Pakatan says won't slash civil service size
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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 9 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) says it will not trim the bloated civil service if it takes over Putrajaya, but will instead focus on making government staff more efficient.

In what appeared to be a move to quell public sector anger over DAP publicity chief Tony Pua's proposal to reduce civil service headcount, the opposition pact today pledged to retain existing staff should it come to govern Malaysia.

"Pakatan Rakyat would like to clarify that the position of the 1.2 million civil servants and officers will be guaranteed, as enshrined in [Articles 132 and 135] of the Constitution," Salahuddin Ayub told reporters in the Parliament lobby.

The PAS vice president was flanked by PKR vice president Nurul Izzah Anwar and PAS central committee member Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad.

Salahuddin pointed out that PR had acknowledged in its alternative Budget the important role civil servants played in carrying out government policies and any attempt to suggest otherwise was slander.

He said the opposition understood that political interference had led to a drop in public sector efficiency and promised a stop to such intervention if PR seized Putrajaya.

Nurul added that PR also intended to get rid of the Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Pemandu) and consultants if voted in as the government, to cut Putrajaya's operating expenditure.

Pua had previously said that DAP would work towards progressively improving the efficiency of Malaysia's bloated civil service by terminating government staff who failed to perform once PR secures federal power.

But Deputy Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Fadillah Yusof said on Monday Putrajaya cannot cut the civil service headcount as manpower was needed to implement the Government Transformation Programme (GTP).

"It's easy for DAP to talk but the Barisan Nasional government has plans which need continuity, such as the GTP, and it definitely involves civil servants," he had said.

The 2011 UN Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) noted that Malaysia has the largest civil service in the region with a civil servant to population ratio of 4.68, compared to Indonesia's 1.79, South Korea's 1.85 and Thailand's 2.06.

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