

Unfair To Compare Number Of Malaysian Civil Servants With Other Countries' – PM

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PUTRAJAYA, Oct 3 (Bernama) -- It is unfair to compare the number of public servants in Malaysia with that of other countries as the definition of public servants in this country is bound by the Federal Constitution, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said the definition in this country covered the health services sector like doctors and nurses, the security forces such as the armed forces and police, and educators including teachers.

"Some of the other countries do not count in employees in the health, security and education sectors as public servants," he said in his speech at the 15th Civil Service Premier Message Gathering (MAPPa) held at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre, today.

MAPPa is an annual event where the prime minister delivers his message to public servants in various service sectors at the federal, state, local government and government-linked company levels.

Najib said the government felt hurt and angry when certain quarters, particularly the opposition, accused the country's civil service as being a 'bloated civil service', that is, exceeding the number in other countries.

"If they (opposition) are in power, with arrogance, they would want to reduce by half the number of civil servants.

"The opposition could even go to the extent of labelling civil servants and giving negative perceptions, besides callously describing the civil service as inefficient, earning 'gaji buta'

(salary for not doing anything), and in the extreme, the opposition leaders are willing to insult civil servants by calling them 'kucing kurap'," he said.

According to Najib, in the government institution, the civil service is the major public service machinery in delivering and implementing all the policies and initiatives of the political master of the day.

He said there were perceptions or thinking that there was separation, that the political master of the day had nothing to do with the civil service, as some would say that the political master might come and go, but the civil service remained the same.

"Contrarily, the government which is formed from members of the administration is actually the hierarchical link with the public service, where the government determines the national administration policy, and as directed, that policy must be implemented by the civil service effectively for the good of the country."

He said the public service sector was mature and civil enough in handling the matter and in facing such aspersions as they deeply understood that the two could not be separated.

"Members of the administration and the civil service are inseparable, like the proverbial 'ibarat aur dengan tebing' (like the bamboo and river bank)," he added.

Therefore, Najib said, when certain quarters or the opposition insulted or slandered civil servants, those nasty words were directed at the whole government and vice versa.

"Hence, we should be grateful for the benefits that we are enjoying and not allow this country to fall into their (opposition) hands as they do not appreciate the toil and contributions of the civil servants.

"If the allegations that civil servants in this country are inefficient, how could it be possible for these civil servants to have given the best services to the public through the Urban Transformation Centres and Rural Transformation Centres."

"These are game changers in public service delivery and recognised by the World Bank as the best government administration model in the world which could save up to RM2 billion in government expenditure."

"If previously it took up to 10 working days to renew a passport, now it takes only one hour, compared to three weeks in the United Kingdom and Australia. In fact, the online passport renewal is now going through the test period. This is what is called innovation in the transformation of the government's service delivery system," he said.

The prime minister also outlined three major challenges to be faced by the public service sector, namely the new order, geopolitics and universal peace threatened by the crisis involving the Gulf states, North Korea's nuclear programme and the implications of Brexit (Britain Exit), and acts of terrorism and bombings at public places by terror groups, and extremism in the world.

"That is why the government is always monitoring the security situation in the country and working at ensuring that our public servants are not influenced by extremist groups like Daesh and IS, what more getting involved in their destructive activities, which these groups have erroneously defined as jihad."

He said the government had also implemented several strategic initiatives under the National Transformation Policy so as to steer Malaysia towards becoming a high-income developed nation and in looking after the interests and welfare of the people, and in meeting their needs.

Najib said the government strived hard to channel aid and implement various initiatives to lessen the people's burden from the rising cost of living, particularly for those 40 per cent

with the lowest household income (B40 group) and M40 (households with moderate income) under the 1Malaysia brand such as the PPA1M, 1Malaysia Clinic, 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M), 1Malaysia Undergraduates Discount Card, as well as various forms of aid for farmers, smallholders, fishermen and Felda settlers.

Najib said the government would also continue to focus on people's infrastructure projects like the world-class Mass Rapid Transit and the East Coast Rail Link and High Speed Rail projects which were being built or would be built.

"In Sabah and Sarawak, the government has kept its promise of building the Pan-Borneo Highway with the hope that isolated areas like Kapit and Ulu Song would be well-connected unlike before and enjoy the fruit of development too," he added.

The prime prime said the third major challenge to be faced by civil servants would be the emergence of the new technology wave known as the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR 4.0) and the digital economy which caused the government to continue working at ensuring the success of the Malaysian digital economy.

He said IR 4.0 would occur with three main characteristics, namely velocity, breadth and depth, and systems impact which would in future result in the world to be filled with phenomena that were unthinkable before such as autonomous cars, quantum computing and artificial intelligence.

"All these require the civil service to respond speedily to the various technology and nuisance or disruptive things and be prepared with fresher and multi-dimensional approaches, and the combinations of top-down and bottom-up, inside-out and outside-in, especially in drawing up new regulatory policies which encompass the rights and privacy of customers, security, education, economy and smart technology," he said.

At the event, Najib also noted that United States President Donald Trump had praised Malaysia's stand which was anti-terrorism and recognised Malaysia as an important

action-oriented nation in the Southeast Asian region and the world in the fight against terrorism.

He said at his meeting with Trump during his recent working visit to the US at the invitation of the American president, the US government had in the official joint statement, agreed that Myanmar should stop the oppression and military operations against the ethnic Rohingya minority.

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