

Government to reintroduce procedures to address bureaucratic red tape - Mahathir

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SERDANG, March 25 (Bernama) -- The government is to reintroduce the old system that encompasses manual procedures, desk files and task flow charts for civil servants to address bureaucratic red tape, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said these enabled a civil servant to know what to do when there is a request to execute a work procedure without having to go through a complicated bureaucratic process.

He said he had discussed with the Chief Secretary to the Government, Datuk Seri Ismail Bakar, on the need to reintroduce the old system.

“If one does not know how to discharge one’s duty, one has to ask someone else; this will delay the process. If there is a task flow chart, civil servants can perform their tasks and hand over the subsequent tasks to others.

“When the matter reaches the top officer, it will be checked to determine whether it has been executed correctly before the request is approved, and this can enhance the bureaucratic service,” he said during a question-and-answer session after launching the Cuepacs premier assembly at Universiti Putra Malaysia, here.

Acknowledging the existence of the bureaucratic red tape in the civil service, Dr Mahathir said work cannot be done without bureaucracy, but problems arise when there are too many processes to doing something.

“(For example) One person wants to run a tourism project in Langkawi. He has to seek permits from close to 20 departments. So, there’s a delay; sometimes the officers

themselves are not very competent or do not know what their responsibilities are," he said.

At the same time, he said, the public should also know the procedure to obtain the approvals for any application.

"At times, they (the public) only obtain the approval from one department, but they do not know that they have to obtain the approvals from three or four other departments," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Chief Secretary to the Government is striving to provide a procedure book for the public on what they have to do when they want to do something.

"For example, if you want to open a hotel, there are several things you have to do before you can get a licence to set up a hotel. The book will advise the people what they have to do and which department they have to go to. If the government can do this, then I think we can reduce the bureaucratic red tape.

"Sometimes, bureaucratic red tape sets in when we have weaknesses. If we want to be treated well, we will also ask the government. And, if we delay work, that is a form of corruption. If there is a delay, some people pay to expedite the work," he said.

Replying to a question on the rising cost of living, Dr Mahathir said the government is striving to control the rise in the prices of goods as the cost of living continues to rise despite the abolition of the Goods & Services Tax (GST).

"In business, the cost of the middleman is very high. For example, the vegetables grown in Cameron Highlands cost 50 sen per kg but the cost is RM7 per kg in the market. Don't tell me the trip from the farmland to the market is so costly," he said.

In this regard, Dr Mahathir said he has asked Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Salahuddin Ayub to investigate the high prices of vegetables.

“Many people think that when the salary is raised, they can buy more. When we raise the minimum wage, the private sector will also increase their wages and cause their products to cost more.

“When the costs of production and services rise, the prices of goods will go up and the cost of living will rise as well,” he said.

Asked whether the rise in the cost of living is the result of a monopoly in the production of goods and services, Dr Mahathir said the government will abolish the system of monopoly while monitoring the prices of goods so that there is no drastic increase in the cost of living.

“We want to abolish monopoly but we have to be careful. Intense competition can bring about the problem of insufficient supply. The government will monitor this. The people have to inform (the government) of the prices so as to control the prices of goods from a drastic rise,” he said.

Asked whether the government will set up a system for the benefit of civil servants, he said Malaysia wants to be a developed nation and, to achieve that goal, the government has to train the younger generation to equip them with job efficiency and find investors to create job opportunities.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia imports RM60 billion worth of foodstuff annually which it can produce in the country and reduce the outflow of funds.

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