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Event	Cutting red tape will reduce corruption
Date	19 December 2018
Publication	The Sun
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Cutting red tape will reduce corruption

MOST Malaysians welcome Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call for a reduction in bureaucracy and red tape in government.

There is no doubt that red tape is a cause of corruption. The more red tape and bureaucracy, the more the corrupt giver has to pay to untie the red tape.

The corrupt receiver too likes to introduce more red tape to get more bribes. Both sides gain and so corruption thrives.

Mr Prime Minister, the rakyat support your noble initiatives to cut red tape and combat corruption more effectively.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail has boldly stated that about 4% of our GDP or a reported sum of about RM47 billion is lost every year, due to corruption. This is a national scandal and few Malaysians realise that we are losing so much that could benefit the underprivileged bottom and middle 40% of our population.

It's no wonder that our economy, national budget and our national debt are under severe strain because of corruption. We cannot sustain our economic resilience and social stability, if we don't take more drastic measures to stamp out corruption and promote more efficiency in the public and business sectors.

That is why all the unproductive politicking has to stop. The rakyat expect the government and opposition leaders to focus more on managing the economy better, to reduce costs and raise standards of living and quality of life.

The DPM rightly wants to target our Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (CPI) to 30th position from the present 62 out of 180 countries covered by the CPI. How can we do it?

The president of TIM, Datuk Seri Akhbar Satar, announced that we scored only 47 out of 100 in the CPI rating for 2017. This score is below average.

The government can change bureaucratic procedures and policies as follows and be consistent with the minister's advice to reduce red tape.

The major causes of red tape are:

- ☉ The national policy that has developed silently over many years to enlarge the public sector even at the expense of the private sector. Once we reduce the public sector, we can cut down on the bloated size of the 1.6 million public service.

- ☉ Reducing the size of the public service will cut down red tape and bureaucracy, because there will be fewer civil servants to tie up the red tape and the economy too.

- ☉ Less bureaucracy will speed up business approvals that can be seriously delayed because of the several levels of approval.

- ☉ Less red tape enables the private sector to be less squeezed and crowded out. It will allow the private and business sectors more space to compete better.

- ☉ The government-linked companies and related government bodies will have to be opened out to encourage more joint enterprises with closer collaboration from the domestic and foreign private sectors to develop more multiracial companies.

- ☉ Government must be courageous. But will it have the courage to change policies to cut red tape? It may be more difficult to do so now after the government and conservative pressure groups decided to reject the ratification of ICERD.

- ☉ Mahathir's announcement to reduce red tape and bureaucracy has struck the right note with most thinking Malaysians. However there is need for a strong political will and firm and sustained support from the majority of Malaysians in order to succeed.

Policies have to change more radically, to improve the eco-system to more effectively combat and curb, counter and control the vicious and dangerous culture of corruption.

But we cannot and should not depend on the government alone. It's the people's challenge and responsibility as well.

- ☉ We can only hope and pray that we resolve to rally round the prime minister's sincere and serious appeal to reduce red tape, which will cut corruption.


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