

REPORTS BY Hana Naz Harun and Qistina Sallehuddin

## OMBUDSMAN MALAYSIA

## Govt mulls merger of complaints bureau, EAIC

**THE** government is considering the merger of the Public Complaints Bureau (PCB) and the Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission (EAIC) for the establishment of Ombudsman Malaysia.

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reform) M. Kulasegaran said this would be carried out through a unique model.

"The government is committed to establishing Ombudsman Malaysia as an independent body that will receive and address complaints related to the federal public service delivery system.

"The Madani government is considering a unique model of Ombudsman Malaysia that will combine PCB and EAIC," he said during the minister's question time in Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Kulasegaran said this in response to Ahmad Tarmizi Sulaiman (PN-Sik), who asked about the latest plans to enact the Malaysian Ombudsman Act that is transparent, accountable and efficient.

Previously, the Centre to Combat Corruption and Cronyism (C4) called for the EAIC to be merged into the proposed establishment of Ombudsman Malaysia due to their similar functions in investigating maladministration.

The corruption watchdog also said consolidating efforts and resources between the Ombudsman and the EAIC, which deals with misconduct by enforcement officers, could result in a more streamlined and effective over-

sight infrastructure.

In its Structuring the Malaysian Ombudsman Office report, C4 also pointed out that PCB lacked a statutory foundation and was vulnerable to political interference, among others.

Kulasegaran said the government was also considering including provisions related to maladministration and misconduct by officers from the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) and the police in the establishment of Ombudsman Malaysia.

He said this matter would be refined and examined during the three-month comprehensive study for establishing Ombudsman Malaysia, which began last month.

"The MACC has its own complaints committee under the MACC Act 2009 to monitor and address non-criminal complaints against its officers and members. Similarly, cases of police misconduct are handled under the Independent Police Conduct Commission.

"However, this issue will be further discussed with relevant ministries and agencies in the upcoming engagement session. An in-depth study on all matters related to Ombudsman Malaysia will be conducted within three months from June 12, followed by reviews and decisions," he said.

Kulasegaran was responding to Kesavan Subramaniam (PH-Sungai Siput), who asked if the establishment of Ombudsman Malaysia would address maladministration or misconduct by MACC officers and police.

