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Ismail: Hiring procedures being 'corrected' after BN rule

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KUALA LUMPUR — Chief Secretary to the Government Datuk Seri Ismail Bakar has denied claims the Public Service Commission (PSC) is sabotaging government officers hired by the Pakatan Harapan (PH) government by giving them lower grades and salaries.

Ismail said the PSC is instead correcting hiring procedures made by the previous Barisan Nasional (BN) administration and following procedures set by the new government to clean up the process of political appointments.

"The previous government did not follow some of the procedures when appointing officers," he told *Malay Mail* yesterday.

"The new government wants us to follow procedures as in the manifesto to put back integrity and good governance."

Ismail was asked to comment on claims the PSC and Public Service Department (PSD) were going against the orders of Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The Malaysian Insight news portal reported that PSD officers had taken it upon themselves to reassign grades of newly appointed officers to respective ministers in Dr Mahathir's Cabinet, which would affect their salaries.

"The prime minister told us not to follow

orders blindly, so it is our duty to make sure everything goes according to proper procedures," said Ismail.

He, however, refuted claims the government was guided by a 2012 PSD circular on posts and service matters relating to the offices of ministers and deputy ministers.

"We will check the salary starting point in each of the grades. For example, for Grade 54, maybe the starting (pay) will be at a higher level instead of the middle level," he said.

Ismail said procedures on political appointments by the new government were being done by the book.

"We are not sabotaging the government. I hope everybody understands the situation

and do not escalate the issue," said Ismail, who was appointed to his position about two weeks ago.

On Aug 3, it was reported that a large number of political appointees, including political secretaries, press secretaries, special functions officers and special officers, have not received their salaries for more than two months.

Dr Mahathir said last week that civil servants loyal to the former BN administration had refused to pay the salaries of officers of ministers under the PH government.

He said it was only when the Cabinet decided to take action on the non-payment that the salaries were paid to the PH ministerial officers.