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வரவு செலவுத் திட்டம் தொடர்பான குழுச்சபை விவாதம்- 2024

Committee Stage Debate on the Budget - 2024

ප්‍රගති වාර්තාව
முன்னேற்ற அறிக்கை
Progress Report

පරිපාලන කටයුතු පිළිබඳ පාර්ලිමේන්තු කොමසාරිස් (මිමිබ්සිමන්) කාර්යාලය
நிர்வாகத்திற்கான பாராளுமன்ற ஆணையாளர் அலுவலகம்
(ஓம்புட்சம்ன்)

Office of Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman)

Progress Report

Introduction

Mandate of the office of Ombudsman is to investigate and inquire into alleged violations of fundamental rights and/or of any injustices caused by the decisions made by officers of Government Departments, Public Corporations, Provincial Councils or in any other similar Institutions and; to make appropriate recommendations correcting any wrongful or unjustifiable decisions if found. Complaints are being sent to this office directly by individuals and also by the Public Petitions Committee that is being referred to it by Hon. Members of Parliament through the Hon. Speaker. Aforesaid powers and duties of the Ombudsman are emanated through the provisions of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration Act No.17 of 1981 as amended by Act No.26 of 1994, read with Article 156 of the Constitution.

Progress

Complaints received for the period between 01.01.2023 and 30.09.2023

The total number of complaints received during the specified period amounts to 1140. Out of the total complaints, which include 24 complaints received from the Public Petition Committee, 422 complaints fall outside the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman. Following an inquiry into the received complaints, relief has been granted in 120 cases, and actions are currently underway to address the remaining complaints. The following outlines the quantity of complaints received and the approach taken to address them during this period.

Total number of pending complaints as of the conclusion of the year 2022		699
Total number of complaints received during the period 01.01.2023 to 30.09.2023		
i. Complaints directly received from the complainants	1126	
ii. Complaints referred by the Parliamentary Public Petition Committee	24	
(2) Total number of complaints received as of 30.09.2023		1140
The aggregate quantity of complaints to be addressed in the year 2023 :-		1839
The manner in which the received complaints were investigated		
Outside the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman	422	
Number of inquiries held	30	
Number of complaints in which reliefs were granted	120	
Total outstanding complaints to be addressed		1267

Key Points to Address Regarding Progress

To realize the aforementioned progress, I intend to direct attention toward the following key areas concerning the expeditious and more efficient execution of the tasks undertaken by this office.

- Annually, our institution receives a significant number of complaints regarding issues that arise during the process of bestowing subsequent rights and deeds for lands under the ownership of the Sri Lanka Mahaweli Authority. It is imperative to highlight that, despite reports being requested from the senior management at the Mahaweli Authority's Head Office, there have been instances of partiality and deviations from established procedures in the actions of residential business managers, divisional managers, and land officers responsible for the Mahaweli Zones where the respective lands are situated. It is an established fact that we have promptly resolved these pertinent issues by formally requesting reports and summoning authorities to the institution for investigative purposes.
- Under the Medical Insurance (Agrahara) scheme for government officials, premiums are collected from the salary of government officials and transferred to the Insurance Trust Fund with the expectation of reaping the benefits. At present, premiums are charged under three categories: Normal, Silver, and Gold, with values of Rs. 125/=-, Rs. 300/=-, and Rs. 600/=-, respectively. Nonetheless, we have received complaints from subscribers who have not received their benefits related to medical insurance for a year or more after applying under their respective category. After making inquiries, the pertinent benefits were disbursed to the applicants. This issue arises due to the National Insurance Trust Fund experiencing significant delays in delivering services to its clients. I observe the significance of enhancing the efficiency of such institutions to mitigate potential difficulties for government officials.
- In every instance of performing the duties within this office, recommendations have been issued in strict adherence to the established rules, regulations, and circulars. Consequently, maximum support has been extended to ensure the proper implementation of the administrative system.

Potential impediments to the anticipated advancement of this office

- Despite the approved cadre for this office being designated for 32 officers, only 19 officers are currently assigned and operational as of 30.09.2023. There are currently 05 vacant positions within the Management Service officers' cadre. Formal requests have been submitted to the Ministry of Public Administration to fill these vacancies. Additionally, although the sanctioned cadre for Translators comprises 02 positions, the role of English/Tamil Translator remains unfilled. The number of authorized drivers is 02, and both positions are currently vacant. The Ministry of Public Administration has been duly informed and requested to expedite the filling of these vacancies. It is worth noting that despite 6 months having elapsed since the commissioner assumed their duties, the driver vacancies remain unfilled to date.
- To enhance the efficiency of the officers and foster a more conducive working environment, requests have been made to grant an allowance equivalent to 1/3 of their basic salary. However, the officials responsible for approving this request have not taken action thus far.
- When requesting reports from the institutions, the process was delayed due to the sending of interim letters to us, along with the time spent on pursuing reports from the subordinates of their organization and issuing reminders. Consequently, if their subordinates fail to provide adequate responses, no disciplinary actions will be taken against them, necessitating the need for us to also request reports from these subordinates. Therefore, the implementation of appropriate measures by the higher-ranking officials of the organization to promptly provide the required reports can help resolve complainants' issues in a timely manner. Moreover, this can lead to cost savings associated with requesting reports and conducting investigations.