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Public, private efforts against human trafficking

ZERO CORRUPTION: Pemudah is at the forefront of bringing change to society to benefit Malaysia and law-abiding citizens

having used a variety of laws to prosecute traffickers.

The main source of references for this bill includes transnational protocols signed and ratified by Malaysia previously, such as the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and the United Nations Convention against Transnational

Organised Crime.

To ensure the smooth and effective implementation of this bill,

a Five-year National Action Plan Against Trafficking In Persons (2010-2015) was also launched. Some 20 government ministries, agencies, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are affected by and involved in implementing the 2007 bill.

They collectively form a Council For Anti-Trafficking In Persons under the home affairs minister, chaired by the ministry's secretary-general.

The council makes recommendations on prevention and suppression, monitoring and data-collection, legislation, enforcement, protection and rehabilitation, creating public awareness, opening of public shelters, and providing training.

A leading NGO in this effort is the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia, which has championed a regional approach or an Asean Declaration Against Trafficking In Persons and a Regional Trafficking In Persons Information Centre.

Another NGO, Tenaganita, has built its programmes around anti-trafficking, migrant and refugee rights protection, health and HIV/AIDS, and business accountability and responsibility.

Foreign embassies, also, have a significant role in advising their nationals to ensure that their employment agencies are reliable and registered.

Similarly, the private sector has a responsibility to assure legal hiring procedures are practised among its agents and also the humane treatment of employees.

The issue and the attendant problems are massive and complex, requiring a large-scale, comprehensive and coordinated re-



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A RECENT exclusive article by *New Straits Times* on bogus marriages for engaging in illegal activities is commendable. Although the root causes of the problem were insufficiently addressed, the article highlighted and raised awareness about global and regional human trafficking.

The fastest-growing criminal industry in the world is second in profitability only to drug trafficking. Malaysia is primarily a destination country for trafficking. Victims are sourced from neighbouring countries for sexual and labour exploitation.

Malaysia has fluctuated from once being in the bottom Tier 3 of the United States' State Department annual ranking of countries on trafficking, to Tier 2, and at times, between Tiers 2 and 3, like most Asian countries. But comparatively, Malaysia has shown significant improvement in combating this issue.

Parliament passed an Anti-Trafficking In Persons Act in 2007 (Act 670 Amended in 2010) after

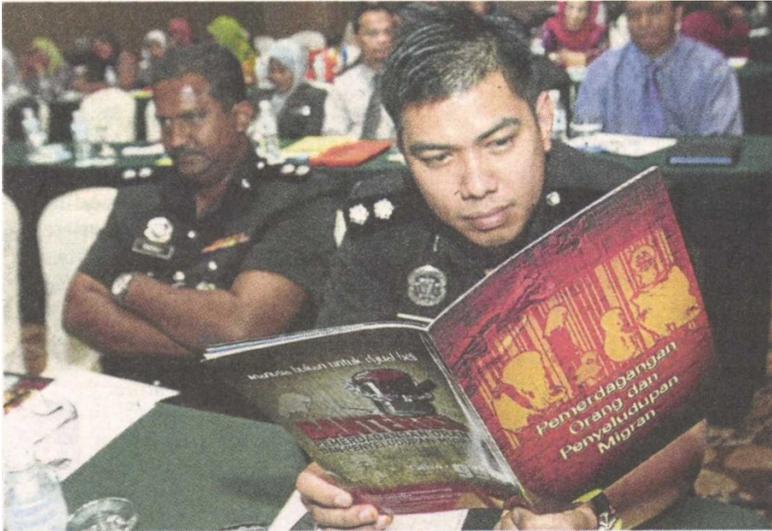
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sponse.

It must be addressed on a holistic basis and must be enforced. All the players and stakeholders need to function on a coordinated basis.

The nature of the problem and its causes must be regularly updated

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Participants at an **anti-human trafficking conference** in a Kuala Lumpur hotel recently.

We are all for pursuing and prosecuting criminals

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and defined, since criminals will continually adjust to measures taken. The path forward to a civil society is a tenuous one in seeking the truth. One of Pemudah's fundamental values is zero corruption of any form and no effort should be spared in pursuing and prosecuting criminals.

Pemudah is a high-powered taskforce to address bureaucracy issues in business-government dealings.

The balance in arriving at that goal can be the difference between smart policing as opposed to a police state. In all the efforts that Pemudah has undertaken, it is mindful of its core values, one of which is facilitate, don't hamper.

This can perhaps be better understood in the context of the Pemudah principle that we should develop solutions that do not hamper or penalise the 99 per cent law-abiding citizens for the unlawful activity of the one per cent.

Pemudah is grateful to the NST for its civic mindedness in helping to promote Pemudah's agenda and successes over the years. These suc-

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cesses are borne of disciplined implementation by civil servants through their ministries and agencies.

Publicising these accomplishments is diminished when some characterise it as boasting. Awareness of these successes helps to build a culture of excellence.

Pemudah still faces many chal-

lenges in its quest to increase Malaysia's global competitiveness. Its mission includes the prime minister's request to also give preference to the people's welfare through initiatives.

This requires full transparency, sensitivity and care to ensure that any rigorous pursuit towards cor-

recting a problem be done so without causing undue difficulties for the majority of law-abiding Malaysians.

Pemudah remains undeterred and vigorously intent in this quest for a civil society that benefits Malaysia and its law-abiding people.