

New pay if we can afford it, says PM

Finance assessment first

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BANGI, Sat. — The Government will first have to be convinced of its financial strength before it can decide on salary adjustments for civil servants, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

On Budget Day, the Government would have to study whether it could afford to offer salary adjustments after taking into account the nation's financial standing, he said.

Asked what was the likelihood of a salary revision given the strong economic recovery currently, Dr Mahathir said he was not in a position to assess the probability.

"This (assessment) is a matter for the Finance Minister, Datuk Paduka Daim Zainuddin," he said after officially opening Dewana Food Industries Sdn Bhd and launching its range of *Brahim* brand of pouch food here today.

Foreign judges

He was commenting on a recent call by the public service trade union umbrella, Cuepacs, that the Government should include a salary adjustment for civil servants in the Budget Day announcement by the Finance Minister.

Its president, Mr A. Rangunathan said recently that the Government was in a position to accommodate this request given the strong recovery of the economy.

Cuepacs' optimism followed the announcement by Minister in the Prime

Minister's Department, Datuk Dr Yusof Nor, on July 1 that he had directed the Public Services Department (PSD) to make proposals to the Government for a formula to settle the civil servants' salary adjustment claims.

On the composition of the tribunal to listen to charges against the five su-

suspended Supreme Court judges, Dr Mahathir said that he did not know whether foreign judges would again be invited to preside during the hearing.

The judges suspended on July 6 by the King are Tan Sri Wan Suleiman Pawan Teh, Tan Sri Eusoofe Abdoolcader, Tan Sri Wan Hamzah Salleh, Datuk

George Seah and Datuk Mohamed Azmi Kamaruddin.

The tribunal, which deliberated on the charges against suspended Lord President Tun Mohamed Salleh Abas, had a Sigaporean and a Sri Lankan judge as members during the hearing which ended early this month.