

PM: Government will keep its pledge to Cuepacs

Review of salaries by end of year

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KUALA LUMPUR Mon. — The Government is making every effort to give its 885,451 employees a salary increase by the end of the year, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today. The Prime Minister said the Government was finalising details for the pay rise but stressed that the exercise was a complex one which needed a lot of time and deliberation.

He was responding to questions on a pay review for civil servants at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport before leaving for a six-day official visit to Mexico to pave the way for closer trade and economic co-operation.

Dr Mahathir said the Government had promised Cuepacs a review of the existing salary structures with a pay increase in mind and would certainly fulfil its pledge.

"The Government met Cuepacs officials very much earlier and the unions' views were being taken into consideration," he said.

He added that he could not disclose the percentage increase or the quantum as yet because the Government has yet to submit its

recommendations to the Cabinet for approval.

"Only when the Cabinet gives its approval will we disclose details of the pending pay rise. But we are making every effort to finalise the review by the end of the year," he said.

Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who was at the airport to send off Dr Mahathir, said a special committee headed by the Prime Minister was looking into the matter and a decision should be made before the end of the year.

"We are seriously looking into the proposed salary review and, God willing, the increase should be effective by the end of the year," he said.

On Jan 23 this year, Dr Mahathir announced an interim pay increase of five per cent for all civil servants, which took effect from Jan 1.

Dr Mahathir said then that the percentage would be increased when the Government had completed a study on the overall salary structure of its employees.

Meanwhile, Dr Mahathir, and Datin Seri Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali will be met on arrival at Mexico City tomorrow by Mexican Foreign Minister Fernando Solana.

Also accompanying the Prime Minister is a delegation which includes Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik and Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbarudin Chik.

Dr Mahathir will then call on President Carlos Salinas de Gortari. This will be followed by talks between the two leaders.

Tomorrow night, the Prime Minister will attend a dinner hosted by Mr Salinas where he will be conferred the Order of the Aztec Eagle. Dr Mahathir will then confer the Most Exalted Order of the Crown of the Realm on behalf of Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Azlan Shah on Mr Salinas.

On Wednesday, Dr Mahathir will lay a wreath at the monument to Mexico's independence heroes. A special ceremony will also be held to declare the Prime Minister a guest-of-honour of Mexico City.

Dr Mahathir will later tour the ruins of the Grand Aztec Temple in Mexico City and parts of the city subway system. He will also attend a luncheon hosted by

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the Mexican Business Council for International Affairs.

He will then visit the Mexican Oil Institute and later attend a special performance of Mexico's National Folkloric Ballet.

On Thursday, the Prime Minister is scheduled to leave for Monterrey, an industrial area, where he will visit several factories and meet local business leaders.

The next day, Dr Mahathir will leave for Altamira where he will visit, among others, the Petrocal Industrial Complex.

On Saturday, he is scheduled to visit another historical site — the Maya ruins. This will be followed by a meeting with officials of the Mexican Fund for Tourism and Development.

The Prime Minister will then leave for New York on a five-day trip, where he will, among others, address the United Nations.

On Sept 23, he will meet Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Rabbie Namaliu and South Korean President Roh Tae-woo and visit the New York Islamic Centre.

The next day, he is scheduled to meet former US Secretary of State Dr Henry Kissinger and Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Perez. Dr Mahathir will address the United Nations later in the day, his fifth address since becoming Prime Minister.

On Sept 25, he will attend discussions with the Malaysia-US Private Sector Consultative Group and address the Asia Society on the topic "The Malaysian economy: The way forward". He is scheduled to meet senior executives of the Wall Street Journal later that day.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to meet Nepalese Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and the president of the Supreme National Council of Cambodia, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the next day.

He will also address the US Council on Foreign Rela-

tions on the topic "The East Asia Economic Group".

Dr Siti Hasmah will have a separate programme which includes a visit to the National Downs Syndrome Society, and a luncheon hosted by the wife of the UN Secretary-General, Mrs Javier Perez de Cuellar.