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DR MAHATHIR SAYS PAY INCREASE FOR MINISTER REASONABLE

Mahathir-salary

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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 29 (Bernama) -- The pay increase for 'the ministers is reasonable if one compares to that received by top executives in the private sector, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

He said that what the ministers were getting *now* were much lower compared to that of top executives in the private sector and certainly did not reflect their enormous responsibility.

+I don't see how it can be more than others. There are ministers holding two portfolios but receiving pay only for one portfolio,+ he said to reporters on his return after visiting Japan and South Korea at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Subang near here.

He said there were also ministers who were more than 65 years old but did not get any pension while others at the age were enjoying two pensions. The Dewan Rakyat at its recent sitting passed the amendments to the Members of Parliament (Remuneration) Act 1980 providing a pay increase of between 60 and 100 per cent for the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, ministers, deputy ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries from Jan 1 next year. --more.

▼29/12/21-59MST

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Rptn, replacing +do+ with +does+ after +Even the Prime Minister. ...+ in para four.

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Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the ministers should have enjoyed several pay increases already but the government did not want to do so.

The government instead slashed their pay to more than 10 per cent for the past 10 years, he said, adding that like others ministers too had to pay taxes.

He said it was true that ministers enjoyed certain perquisites or +perks+ with their positions but compared to those in the private sector they were very much lower.

+Perks received by an executive in the private sector totalled to almost \$1 million a year. Even the Prime Minister does not get that much.

+People accused ministers of being in business. I want to know who. If true, then he has to resign,+ he said.

--more.

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On pay increase for top government officers,' he said many such officers would have left the service if the pay was not at par with that in the private sector.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the pay being received by these officers were not higher even when compared to those working in government owned corporations.

+In some government owned corporations, top executives are paid more than \$25,000 a month, excluding the perks,+ he said. --Bernama.

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