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Mahathir-Bonus

GOVT WILL RECONSIDER BONUS IF GROUNDS REASONABLE, SAYS PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, April 29 (Bernama) — The Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad) today said the government may reconsider giving bonus to civil servants if their union, Cuepacs, can give reasonable grounds to back their demand for such payment.

He said although the government had decided against paying bonus to civil servants for 1991 and 1992, it was still prepared to hear Cuepacs' appeal and its grounds.

"Actually we have made our decision but in whatever matter, we can't close the matter just like that," he said when approached by reporters after presenting excellent service awards to Home Ministry personnel at the Prime Minister's Department here.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Home Minister, was commenting on yesterday's news reports that Cuepacs secretary-general A.H Ponniah would appeal to the Prime Minister that the government pay civil servants bonus for 1992.

The Prime Minister said he was prepared to listen to Cuepacs' views but Cuepacs also should be open minded and accept the government's decision if the government's grounds are better than Cuepacs'.-- more

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▼29/04/18-52MST

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Earlier Cuepacs had accepted the government's explanation for not being able to pay civil servants bonus for 1991 as it had already spent about RM2.9 billion on the New Remuneration System which became effective from Jan 1 1991.

However, Ponniah was reported as saying that Cuepacs would still press for bonus for civil servants for 1992.

Asked what would be the financial implication if the government were to give bonus to more than 800,000 civil servants, the Prime Minister said: "I can't given an accurate figure but obviously if we were to pay bonus, we'll have to fork out a hefty sum."

He said eventhough the government may have surplus revenue, the money could not be used solely to pay bonus just because the government had made a promise to members of the civil service.

"We also have to spend on soaring development expenditures. So we also have to consider these expenditures," he said.-- more

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Dr Mahathir said it was still premature to make an assessment on the effectiveness of the New Remuneration System since it was only in the second year of implementation.

However, he said, there was already an increasing awareness among public sector workers to strive for excellence in service and aim at winning the excellent service award which gives them a diagonal pay increment.

In his speech, the Prime Minister said a bigger reward awaited hardworking Malaysians, including civil servants, when Malaysia became more advanced and gained greater respect.

"We have the right to be proud and satisfied with our current achievement but that should not makes us arrogant and aloof," he said.

Dr Mahathir said public sector workers should not be complacent but instead observe higher work ethics so that Malaysia could achieve greater progress and that its public administration continued to set an example to others.

Forty Home Ministry staffers and one from the office of the Registrar of Societies received excellent service awards from the Prime Minister.--

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▼29/04/19-31MST