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Salary (News Focus)

CONSULTATION BEARS FRUIT IN WAGE REVISION ISSUE

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 1 (Bernama) -- While civil servants generally greeted news of their salary adjustment by calculating the windfall due to them, a more compelling reason to rejoice is the spirit of give and take which led to the settlement of the wage revision issue.

Cuepacs, the umbrella body of civil service unions, must be relieved that the wage issue which had dragged on for 16 months had finally been settled with most of its requests met.

Central to its claims was to give the lower-income group a better deal, and this the government had fulfilled.

"What we are receiving is the best offer for government servants," Cuepacs President Mohamad Mat Jid said today.

Settlement was made possible by the spirit of consultation practised by the government and Cuepacs, he said.

Under the new salary package unveiled yesterday, no civil servants will earn less than RM500 a month.

And for the first time, 655,000 civil servants will get a monthly housing allowance -- RM85 for the support group and RM95 for the management and professional group.

Mohamad said although the RM85 allowance might seem small, it would come in handy for the lower-income workers.

With the government's emphasis on low-cost housing, the allowance would encourage these workers to buy houses, he said.

The government has also shown its willingness to compromise by dishing out an additional RM96 million to the RM2,000 million it originally offered for the salary revision.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said last night that the additional allocation was to ensure that all categories of workers get a fair deal under the new package.

Under the salary revision, premier management group staff get a RM100 rise, the professional and management group RM60 and the support group RM40.

"We agree with Dr Mahathir's statement that the revision should benefit all government workers," Mohamad said.

The package also provides for support group workers who are stuck on their maximum salary scales to be given two increments and professional and management staff to get one increment.

Mohamad said many workers had been denied of increments because they had reached their maximum salary scales. -- Bernama