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Mahathir-Cuepacs

CUEPACS MUST ACCEPT WHAT IS RIGHT, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 11 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the government can consult Cuepacs on the formula for the salary revision for civil servants but the congress must be prepared to accept what is right.

The Prime Minister, who stood firm on the stand that the distribution must be fair to all, said the government should not be blamed if the discussions took time and payment could not be made before Hari Raya Aidilfitri next month.

"Everyone should get a fair share, that is our stand... if they have a different view, present it. But, if the discussions take time, don't blame the government if even until Hari Raya we do not make payment," he added.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters after opening the "National Forum On Deficit In Balance Of Payment" at a hotel here.

The one-day forum, attended by more than 200 participants from various sectors, was organised by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI) and sponsored by Bank Bumiputera Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir was asked about the resolution adopted by Cuepacs' 20th convention yesterday that it would reject the government's offer of a salary revision for the 848,000 civil servants if distribution of the salary adjustments, involving a total of RM2 billion, did not follow the formula submitted by the congress to the Public Services Department (PSD).

The six-point resolution also said Cuepacs wanted to be consulted first if the government decided to implement the salary adjustments according to its own formula.

Dr Mahathir said he could not understand the resolution because the government had explained that distribution of the RM2 billion should be fair and not only to favour a particular group.

"We can consult with them but that does not mean we must follow what they say. They must also bear in mind that in consultations with us, they should not impose conditions. Discussion means a willingness to accept what is right," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the RM2 billion offer by the government would not be increased and fair distribution was required because all sections of the government contributed to the administration.

The government would make a decision according to what was fair after consulting Cuepacs, he added.

"There are procedures for discussions. Discussion means they give their view, we give ours and after that we make a decision according to what is seen as fair," he said.

He pointed out, however, that if arbitration was resorted to in order to settle the salary adjustment issue, there could be no threat of a strike.

If there was a threat to strike, it was no longer arbitration because the parties involved would be forced to make a decision under pressure, he said.

Asked if Cuepacs was adopting a "stubborn" stand on the issue, Dr Mahathir said: "I find there are one or two people in Cuepacs who do not want to speak to me, a don't understand why... I receive an award from Cuepacs but after giving me the award they reject my views, I think that is difficult." -- BERNAMA