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Cuepacs-Talks

CUEPACS WANTS PSD TO RESTART TALKS ON TWO CLAIMS

KUALA LUMPUR, July 25 (Bernama) -- Cuepacs today urged the Public Services Department (PSD) to reopen negotiations on two major claims by civil servants that were left unresolved during last year's salary adjustment talks.

Cuepacs president Mohamad Mat Jid said the two claims were among several dropped by Cuepacs last year when PSD came up with all sorts of excuses without revealing the higher allowances and perks in store for top civil servants.

"It looks like Cuepacs' sincerity at last year's talks was not appreciated," he told reporters after a Cuepacs committee meeting here.

The meeting decided to object to the government's decision to give special incentives and higher allowances to special grade and top management group civil servants with effect from Jan 1 this year.

The special incentive allowance of RM500 and increased perks of between RM500 and RM4,000 a month were announced by PSD Director-General Datuk Dr Mazlan Ahmad last week.

The increased allowances and perks will cost the government RM46.36 million a year, that is RM16.46 million for top management group and special grade officers and RM29.9 million for Grades 1 and 2 officers.

The 800 top management group and special grade officers get special incentives and increased allowances and perks ranging from RM500 to RM4,000 a month.

Grades 1 and 2 officers numbering 9,136 get an increase of between RM150 and RM350 a month in fixed housing allowance, bringing to RM700 for Grade 1 and RM900 for Grade 2.

Mohamad said Cuepacs was not questioning the rights of senior civil servants to higher allowances but only regretted that it had not been told about the matter.

"We have always tried to have good ties with the government and PSD, but when such a major matter is kept from us, we feel like being cheated," he said.

When Cuepacs asked for the salary gap between top and lower-ranking staff to be narrowed, PSD cited various reasons to reject the request, including the importance of using the principle of equality as the thrust of salary revision talks, he said.

Unaware of what was going on behind its back, Cuepacs had out of sincerity agreed that the increase given to the lower group be extended to the higher category staff, he said.

The government subsequently approved several increases based on the equality principle, like a salary hike of RM60 for the Support Group, RM90 for the Professional and Management Group and RM150 for the Higher Management Group as well as fixed housing allowance of RM90 for the Support Group and RM110 for the Professional and Management Group, he said.

To get the increases effective Jan 1 last year, Cuepacs agreed to drop several claims, including calculating pension without limitation in years of service, and abolition of the Matrix Salary Schedule.

"So now we want the negotiation on pension and Matrix Salary Schedule to be restarted. If the government can give RM46 million to the top officers, we also want the principle of equality to be applied," he said.

According to his estimate, it will cost the government only an additional RM20 million a year to pay pension according to the years of

service without limiting it to 25 years.

It would not cost anything to abolish the Matrix Salary Schedule, he said.

Mohamad said Cuepacs would submit a memorandum on these claims to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Monday and also seek a meeting with him.

The memorandum would, among other things, ask the government to give housing allowance of at least RM230 to all government servants and to keep its promise to pay housing allowance arrears from Jan 1 1995 to June this year to the estimated 4,000 workers who stayed in government quarters for free.

"We will ask PSD to clarify which group of officers saw the most resignations, whether the top management group or Grade 1 and Grade 2," he said when referring to PSD statistics that 2,403 professional staff like medical officers, medical specialists, engineers and architects had left service since 1990.

Mohamad said most of those who left were Grades 1 and 2 officers but the people who benefited most from the increases and perks were top management group officers.

"We have no intention to put sand into their rice bowl but we hope PSD can be sincere if it wants to help the government stop the actual brain drain from the civil service," he said. -- BERNAMA

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