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Bid for longer maternity leave

MALACCA, Wed. - Cuepacs has sent the Government a memorandum, seeking 60 days maternity leave for civil servants.

Its president, Mohamad Mat Jid, said they now have 41 days' leave whereas their counterparts in the private sector has 60 days.

"Cuepacs strongly feels that civil servants are entitled to longer leave so that they have enough rest after giving birth and remain healthy and productive in their work.

"More days off allow them to make the necessary arrangements at home before returning to work. When they are more prepared, they can better concentrate on their work."

Mohamad added that non-governmental organisations and the National Council of Women's Organisation also agreed with the proposal.

He said that the Public Services Department had been consulted and Cuepacs expected to get an answer soon.

"We have been pushing for this for many years. There are indications that our proposal will be accepted this time," he said.

"Hopefully, the Government can implement it by this year."

Meanwhile, Mohamad said Cuepacs had received numerous complaints from teachers against the new remuneration scheme, claiming unfair evaluation and victimisation by their superiors.

"Almost everyday we and the National Union of Teaching Profession receive complaints. However, all of these are verbal.

"I advise teachers to write official complaints so that we can compile and submit them to the Government."

Mohamad claimed that the performance evaluation system for civil servants on annual salary increments of vertical, diagonal or horizontal proportions was not satisfactory and had caused many Government servants to stop working hard.

He said studies by Cuepacs' found that about 90 per cent of its estimated 130,000 members did not agree with the present evaluation system.

He said the NRS gave the assessing officers too much authority which could lead to abuse of power.

To another question, Mohamad said Cuepacs had formed a committee to carry out comparative wage studies of the civil and private services as a guideline for future salary demands.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said recently that the Government was doing a study to determine whether the salaries of civil servants were adequate to meet the cost of living.

Initial findings revealed that civil servants from the middle levels down were better paid than their counterparts in the private sector if their perks, including pension, were taken into account.

But the salary of high-ranking civil servants was comparatively lower than private sector executives, Dr Mahathir had said.

Mohamad said Cuepacs however felt that the wages of public sector employees' were lower than their private sector counterparts.

"It has become very difficult to recruit people for the civil service due to the low salaries," he said, claiming that of some 14,000 vacancies in the Education Ministry only 6,000 had been filled so far.

PSD director-general Datuk Dr Mazlan Ahmad recently said 130,000 vacancies in the public sector, particularly in the professional and

technical fields, were unfilled.

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