

07/04/1997

Ministry's proposal to reward loyal workers

Wendy Lim

LONG-serving employees - both in the private sector as well as the Government - could benefit from special perks, including education aid for their children, if a Human Resources Ministry proposal is adopted.

Under the proposal, employees who serve for more than 25 years with an organisation or the Government will be rewarded by their employers with, among other things, "something to do with (their children's) education", said Human Resources Minister Datuk Lim Ah Lek.

Lim said he expects to submit a Cabinet paper on the proposal by next month, after receiving feedbacks from three other ministries. The minister declined to provide details.

He said a draft of the proposal has been circulated to several ministries and agencies, including the Public Services Department, for their feedback.

"Several ministries have already given their feedback. The inputs that we have received have been positive," Lim said in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Details on the proposal, however, will only be known when the ministry has received all the inputs. The minister also said that the proposal will involve "a lot of money".

The idea of rewarding loyal employees in the public or private sectors was made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in January.

Lim said his ministry was directed by the Prime Minister to come up with a proposal on how the Government and the private sector could reward employees as an incentive to be loyal to one employer.

"It has something to do with skills and the country's human resources needs under Vision 2020," said Lim. "Our aim is to implement the scheme next year. Of course, this is subject to Cabinet approval."

Currently, some companies reward their workers in recognition for their long services. Such rewards, the minister said, could come in the form of overseas trips, cash and gold watches. However, such rewards are known to have lost their ability to discourage people from hopping from one job to another. Not even a moratorium among banks has helped reduce employee turnover.

The proposed special benefits for long-serving employees, perhaps, is aimed at checking the rampant job-hopping phenomenon, the result of Malaysia's full employment, skills shortages and staff-pinching among employers themselves.

According to a study done by the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), employees in Japan, France and Germany were likely to remain with one employer for an average of 22 years. The figure hovered around 13 years in the US, Australia and the Netherlands.

There are no exact figures for the Malaysian employee but Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak said when opening a conference in May last year that he was sure the Malaysian average was "far below that of OECD countries".

(END)