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PM: Dept studying wages in private, public sectors

Kamarul Yunus

THE Public Services Department (PSD) is conducting a comparative study on wages in the public and private sectors to serve as a guideline for the Government to tackle issues concerning wage increases in future.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the study is aimed at determining whether there is any truth that those working in the private sector are being paid more than those in the public sector.

"Our initial finding shows that the lower category of government staff are getting more than their counterparts in the private sector, including perks.

"However, the top executives in the public sector are being paid less than what the corporate executives are getting and to the extent that a corporate executive gets more than what I am getting.

"Thus, we are doing research to determine whether what is being said is true or not," he told reporters after witnessing a signing of a construction agreement and officiating at a ground-breaking ceremony of the Islamic Arts Museum in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The Prime Minister was asked to elaborate on his speech when presenting the excellent service awards to 194 staff and officers of the Prime Minister's Department held earlier yesterday morning.

Citing that the report on the survey will be used as a guideline for the Government, Dr Mahathir said the study will determine the actual difference in salary paid to staff and officers in the public and private sectors.

"People are saying the private sector pays more and this is unfair to government officers. But we found out that top executives in the public sector are the ones being paid less than in the private sector," he added.

Asked whether the Government will revise the salary scheme for government employees after the study, Dr Mahathir said the report on the survey will merely be a guideline for the Government in seeking solutions when faced with demands for wage increase.

"We are concerned with the situation now that whenever the Government manages to resolve a problem on wage increase, there comes a new demand. It seems that there is no end to this problem.

"We are being burdened with the demands that the current salary in the public sector is not enough to live comfortably and so on. But this situation also exists in the private sector," he added.

At the awards presentation, Dr Mahathir said wages in the country are still considered among the highest in the region.

"Under the new remuneration scheme, we still pay higher than in other countries. And this scheme seems to have been accepted by most Government employees although there is still a minority of workers who disagree and feel the Government is being unfair to them, especially when they did not get increase in wages or promotion," he added.

He also urged government employees not to be jealous of the high salary secured by those in the private sector but stressed that they should improve productivity and be prudent in spending.

He added government employees, almost one million strong, should understand the role of the Government in developing the country.

"They should not oppose development, otherwise they will suffer too. If the country is developed, they will also benefit.

Dr Mahathir said the Government, its administrators and the worker

unions should know their roles to assist the country in its development.

"They should accord priority to helping the country develop rather than self-interest," he said, adding that the role and attitude of these three groups of people might hinder development in the country.

For example, he said, the administration of development will be in jeopardy if politicians are more interested in only securing higher posts in the Government.

"They will be fighting one another to secure higher posts, thus ignoring the main task of administrating the country," he said.

However, Dr Mahathir said, Malaysia is fortunate to have an administrative system which is admired by other countries.

"Malaysia's administration system is regarded by other countries as among the best in the world," he said.

As recognition to the commitment and dedication shown by staff and officers of the Prime Minister's Department, Dr Mahathir presented them with the excellent awards in the form of letter of appreciation, a saving premium or shares in Amanah Saham Bumiputera worth RM300 each.

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