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Mahathir-pay

PSD DIRECTED TO STUDY CIVIL SERVANTS' PAY

KUALA LUMPUR, May 16 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he has directed the Public Services Department (PSD) to study civil servants' demand for a pay rise.

"I am waiting for the study report on the civil service salaries since we notice there are claims for more pay," he said at the presentation of the 1996 excellent service awards to staff of the Prime Minister's Department here.

Dr Mahathir said if allowances and pensions were added to the total pay, civil servants' income was better than that of the private sector except at the executive level.

"At the lower and medium levels, civil servants' total income was better than that of the private sector," he said.

He said the decision on the claims depended on the outcome of the study and the government's ability to pay.

However, the prime minister said, the civil servants' gross pay, if inclusive of allowances and pensions later, was better than that of those in the private sector except at the executive level.

He said at the low and middle-level, the civil servants' gross pay was more than that in the private sector.

Dr Mahathir was later asked to elaborate on the matter after he performed the ground-breaking for the site of the proposed Islamic Arts Museum near the National Mosque here.

The prime minister said the government would use the PSD study and report as a guideline in dealing with pay-rise demands submitted by unions.

"We've heard various claims of inadequate subsistence and of this and that. But the situation in the private sector is also the same.

"We're worried that each time we resolve one problem, immediately there is a new demand," he said.

The prime minister said initial report from the study showed that income of government servants at the lower level, inclusive of various allowances and perks, was comparatively better than that of their counterparts in the private sector.

However, the government would continue with the study until it had gathered enough information on the salaries of officers and staff in both the sectors to be used as comparisons, he said.

The prime minister said that like the public, the government too could not spend beyond its means and imprudent spending may bring about adverse effects.

"We can borrow for development purposes as directly or indirectly we can reap the benefits but this is not so in the case of salary payment," he said.

The almost one million civil servants in particular, he said, should appreciate the fact that it was required of them to play their role in ensuring that development took place smoothly.

Dr Mahathir said he was thankful that the nation's civil administration was running well despite allegations of corruption and inefficiency.

This was evident by the country's economic growth in excess of eight per cent for nine years running, an achievement regarded as the best in the world, he said.

The outcome was that Malaysia was able to put up various infrastructure in a short time, he said.

At the award ceremony, 176 Prime Minister's Department staff each received a watch, commendation letter and either Bumiputera Trust Fund (ASB) or Bank Simpanan Nasional (BSN) premium certificates from Dr Mahathir.

In his speech, Chief Secretary to the Government Datuk Abdul Halim Ali said this was the first time that award recipients were given the ASB or BSN certificates upon approval of the amendment to the circular on excellent service.

-- BERNAMA

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