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PSD to look into shift to Putrajaya when reviewing Cuepacs' claim

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - The Public Service Department will consider the shifting of public sector employees to the new Federal administrative centre in Putrajaya when reviewing Cuepacs's demand for higher housing allowances.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the Government would, however, make a final decision only when the PSD has completed its study on Cuepacs' claim on permanent housing allowances for public sector employees.

"Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has also said that the Government will conclude the matter only after looking at comments from the PSD, Treasury and the Economic Planning Unit," he said, adding that he would call for a Press conference once a decision has been reached.

Anwar was speaking to reporters at his Hari Raya Aidilfitri open house held at the Putra World Trade Centre.

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, was asked to comment on whether the 80,000 Government servants, who would move to Putrajaya in stages, were also included in the memorandum submitted by Cuepacs.

Cuepacs submitted a memorandum to PSD last month seeking an increase in permanent housing allowance to RM230 a month from the current RM110 for those in the professional and management group while staff in the support group receive RM90 a month.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir said the outcome of Cuepacs' claims would depend on the Government's financial standing.

Putrajaya, is being developed on a 4,000ha site, 25km from Kuala Lumpur. The new city will cost RM20 billion and is scheduled for completion by the year 2005.

Earlier when met, PSD director-general Datuk Dr Mazlan Ahmad said the department was still studying Cuepacs' claims.

"It is still too early to say anything. Once we have completed our study, we will submit it to the Government," he said.

Anwar, responding to another question on whether the Government had finalised the dividend to be paid out to contributors of the Employees Provident Fund, Anwar said: "Yes. The fund will be coming out with a statement soon."

The New Straits Times had recently reported that the fund was likely to declare a dividend of 7.6 per cent for last year.

In 1995, the EPF declared a 7.5 per cent dividend, the lowest in the past 15 years.

On whether the Anti-Corruption Agency had completed its investigations on Perwaja Steel Berhad, he said he had yet to receive any report on it.

Earlier last month, Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah said the ACA had yet to refer the investigation file on claims of mismanagement in Perwaja Steel Berhad to him.

It was reported that the ACA was in the final stages of investigating claims of mismanagement at the steel plant which had resulted in losses amounting to RM2.9 billion.

In September last year, director-general Datuk Shafee Yahya said the ACA had completed 70 per cent of its probe.

On the Hari Raya sermon at all mosques this year which had touched mainly on the social ills facing youths, Anwar said this was an attempt to check the worrying trend.

"Dr Mahathir had also touched on the issue in his Hari Raya Aidilfitri message.

"I am sure that if all of us played our part, it will bring some positive changes," he said.

On a recent newspaper report that fund managers were worried that the listing of the Bakun Hydroelectric Corporation Bhd would lead to lack of liquidity in the stock market, Anwar said: "I believe there is enough liquidity (for all future projects). As such they need not worry."

He was asked to comment on the concern over the impact of the proposed listing on liquidity in the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange.

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