

Cuepacs to study effects of extra monthly rest day

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PETALING JAYA: Cuepacs will conduct a six-month study in the effectiveness of the extra monthly rest day beginning next year.

Its president, S. Siva Subramanian said Cuepacs would use the results of the study to substantiate its case to ask the Government for a five-day working week for civil servants later.

"However, we have to bear in mind that the Saturday or Thursday rest day is not a holiday as civil servants still have to make up for it by working longer hours on other days," he said.

Siva was referring to the Government's move to fix the first Saturday or Thursday (for Kedah, Terengganu and Kelantan) of each month as the rest day.

00 Monday Public Service Department director-general Datuk Samsudin Osman said in a circular that the new working hours for states taking Saturday as the rest day were 8am to 4.30pm (Monday to Friday) and 8am to 12.38pm on Saturdays.

For states having Thursday as the rest day, the new working hours are 8am to 4.15pm (Saturday to Wednesday) and 8am to 12.38pm on Thursdays.

When tabling the 1999 budget on Oct 23, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Yahathir Mohamad announced an extra rest day a month for civil servants in an effort to create a caring society by having them visit their parents and relatives and at the same stimulate domestic tourism.

Siva described the move as positive saying it would encourage more motorists to use the highway on the rest days.

"It will thus create more activities along the highway bringing in more income for traders along the routes," he said.

Cuepacs is the largest public sector employees union.

Asian Overland operations marketing manager Mark Suppiah believed that the move would give more opportunity to families to spend time together and travel the country more.

He said it would be better if the Government could declare every alternate Saturday or Thursday as rest days but did not think there was a need to extend the move to the private sector as most companies observed a five-day working week.

Tour Land managing director Arul Dass said the move would enable tour operators to organise suitable holiday packages and activities for families and companies.