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Civil servants to get second portion of bonus in April

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THE Cabinet has agreed that payment for the second instalment of the bonus for civil servants for last year be paid next month as promised, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim announced yesterday.

"(There is) no delay ... the Cabinet has endorsed that," Anwar told reporters in Petaling Jaya yesterday after he moderated a session at the National Smart Partnership Dialogue.

He said the Cabinet agreed that payment be made in April as agreed in the 1998 Budget.

A total of 850,000 civil servants received the first payment of their bonus last December.

Anwar had announced a month bonus or minimum payment of RM700 to all civil servants except those in the top management group from Superscale C officers onwards when tabling this year's Budget last October.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad - when asked by reporters whether the Government will pay the balance of the one-month salary bonus for civil servants, after his visit the Limkokwing Institute of Creative Technology in Petaling Jaya - said he will leave it to Anwar to decide on the matter.

He said that the second portion of the one-month bonus will be paid as long as the Government can afford it.

He also clarified the misconception among some quarters that a bonus is a right.

"A bonus is not a right but is returns based on either our contributions (to the company) and which the situation allowed for it to be paid out," he said.

"If bonus is taken as a right, then it will also be regarded as a delayed payment and will no longer serve as an incentive.

"And, we will like to clarify that a bonus is not delayed pay. Bonus is given when we have sufficient earnings," he added.

This is the fifth time the Government has given bonus to civil servants, including the police and military personnel, in recognition of their contributions to national development and well-being.

The first was in 1993 when 850,000 civil servants were rewarded with a bonus of a half-month salary or a minimum of RM400. The following year and 1995, the quantum was respectively a one-month salary or minimum of RM600.

Bernamea reports: Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Service (Cuepacs) deputy secretary-general Abdul Rahman welcomed Anwar's statement.

He also said that Cuepacs will officially present its proposal as soon as possible to Public Services Department (PSD) Director-General Tan Sri Dr Mazlan Ahmad that its members contribute RM10 or 10 per cent of their bonus to help in the country's economic recovery.

The contribution is to show that members of the civil service also cared about the economic problems that the country is facing now, he said.

Cuepacs has not received any objections from its members to the proposal which was tabled at the meeting of the congress' committee on February 16, he added.

(END)