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Mustapa-Assistance

CURRENT ACCOUNT SURPLUS ENABLES GOVT TO PAY RM400 AID

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 3 (Bernama) -- The current account surplus for this year amounting to RM8.4 billion has enabled the government to continue to pay the salary and give financial aid to civil servants, said Second Finance Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed today.

The country's current account recorded a surplus because incomes had exceeded expenditures, he told reporters at the Parliament lobby, here.

He was asked to comment on the financial aid of RM400 each to civil servants in lieu of bonus announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad when opening the 21st Cuepacs triennial conference yesterday.

Public Services Department (PSD) Director-General Tan Sri Dr Mazlan Ahmad said yesterday it would cost the government RM338 million to pay the financial aid to some 847,000 civil servants compared to RM1 billion spent for the bonus before this.

Cuepacs and several organisations had asked Dr Mahathir to give incentive to civil servants in lieu of bonus due to the economic downturn.

The government started paying bonus to civil servants in 1993 of either a half month pay or a minimum of RM400 and again in 1994 and 1995 with one month pay or a minimum of RM600.

In 1996, the bonus was again one month pay or a minimum of RM700 for the lower category staff while last year it was the same amount but paid in two installments.

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