

04/03/1998

Final part of bonus for civil servants next month

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PETALING JAYA, Tues. - As promised by the Government, civil servants will be paid the second instalment of their one-month bonus for last year next month, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today.

Speaking after closing the National Smart Partnership Dialogue at the Sunway Lagoon Resort Hotel, Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said the Cabinet had agreed that payment of the second instalment would be made next month as agreed in the 1998 Budget.

"(There will be) no delay. The Cabinet has endorsed it," Anwar said.

Earlier today, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the balance of the one-month-salary bonus for civil servants, due in April, would be paid as long as the Government was able to do so.

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

The first instalment of the bonus was paid last December.

This is the fifth time that the Government has given a 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 received a half-month bonus or a minimum of RM400.

Anwar also said the Government was preparing the guidelines on the sale of Bumiputera shares in companies to non-Bumiputeras.

He was asked whether the Economic Planning Unit had been directed to identify non-Bumiputera companies which would acquire shares in Bumiputera entities.

"I don't think it is the issue of deciding any particular company.

"It is a policy decision and we have to introduce specific guidelines which would be announced soon," he said.

Earlier, when closing the dialogue, Anwar said both the private and public sectors should play a role in ensuring a speedy recovery of the economy.

On complaints by certain dialogue participants that businessmen found it difficult to secure loans from commercial banks, Anwar said he would take up the matter with Dr Mahathir and the Cabinet.

"In order to ensure that our economy recovers without having to seek the assistance of the International Monetary Fund, we have to adjust to reforms," he said.

Anwar added that in the past, the credit growth in the country was too high and too rapid. He said 54 per cent of the credit was in the property and construction sector alone.

"We have to acknowledge the fact that there have been weaknesses. These have to be rectified."

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