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PSD working on new pensions rate

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The Public Service Department is preparing a working paper on minimum pensions payment to be submitted to the Cabinet soon.

It is expected to be ready in three to four weeks.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Bernard Dompok said the PSD was working on the minimum rate for pensioners. The current minimum of RM180 a month (for 25 years' service) was introduced in July 1980.

It was however learnt that the payment would be less than the poverty rate of RM460, specified under the Seventh Malaysia Plan.

Many variables were taken into account before the poverty rate was calculated, said a PSD source.

For instance, said the source, the poverty rate calculation took into account an average of 4.9 members per family.

"But since pensioners usually do not have growing children, we calculate on the basis of two members. Therefore, the minimum pension payment should be about RM200.

"But that is not the minimum rate. There are a few rates we are looking at ranging from RM200 to the amount requested by Cuepacs which is RM500.

"However, the new rate will be higher than what pensioners are getting now."

The source said it was impossible to pay RM500 as Cuepacs asked.

It was learnt that the department had not received the memorandum on the matter from Cuepacs.

"We understand they sent a copy to the Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad). We do not know what is the development," said the source.

There are about 400,000 pension recipients including widows of deceased government servants.

Meanwhile, the open day organised by the PSD's pensions department on Feb 26 saw about 120 members turning up.

The department has allocated the last Saturday of each month for pensioners to settle their grouses or seek other services.

The PSD holds the open day in three centres: Kuala Lumpur, Kota Kinabalu and Kuching.

Dompok said the PSD would introduce the open day concept at all its State branches, depending on the response to the second open day on March 25.

Dompok was speaking to reporters after opening the Malaysian Technical Co-operation Programme (MTCP) at Intan here today.

More than 80 government officers from 25 countries are attending the five-week course, including one week at the second Global Knowledge Conference, which is part of the South-South Co-operation programme.

"Malaysia is fully committed to sharing its experience with developing countries and the fact that the MTCP programme has been in existence for 20 years reflects this commitment," Dompok said.

Over the past 19 years, Intan has trained more than 1,600 participants from 105 countries, while the programme as a whole has trained more than 5,400 participants.

Dompok said Intan, under the MTCP, would be sending two officers to Uzbekistan and Sudan each next month to conduct courses in human resource management.

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