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NRS issues still need to be resolved, says Dr M

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The Government has yet to announce changes to the New Remuneration System as several issues need to be resolved, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said the matter was still being studied by the Chief Secretary to the Government and the Public Service Department.

"It is a very complex thing. We have to really study it," he said when asked at what stage the review of the NRS was.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir had attended a Workers Day celebration organised by the PSD and Cuepacs at the National Public Administration Institute here.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir reiterated the Government's stand to review the NRS.

The system has drawn much flak from Cuepacs, which said it was openly abused by heads of departments.

Cuepacs had submitted several memoranda to the Government urging it to review the NRS which was implemented in 1992.

The congress, which represents unions in the public service, had also held meetings with Dr Mahathir to voice their displeasure over the system.

Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Samsudin Osman admitted some heads of departments had abused the system.

"Theoretically, the system is good. But as its implementation depends on human beings, at times, they are not objective and there seems to be favouritism," he said.

He said generally, the provisions in the NRS benefits civil servants. Only one or two issues were constantly criticised.

"Workers are unhappy with the way the performance reports or appraisals are done.

"They say it is unfairly done and we feel there is some truth to this," he said.

Samsudin said he had directed the PSD to speed up the review of the system so that recommendations could be forwarded to the Government soonest.

Dr Mahathir was also asked to elaborate on the Government's decision to extend the compulsory retirement age for civil servants by one year.

He said what was agreed by the Government was to allow civil servants to complete one more year of service after they attain 55 years.

"What we have proposed is to allow civil servants to serve one more year after they reach 55 years. This means, they only retire on their 56th birthday," he said.

Asked when this would be implemented, Dr Mahathir said the law would have to be amended before this could be done.

In March, Cuepacs said the Government had agreed in principle to extend the retirement age for civil servants from 55 to 56.

The retirement age of 56 will be on indefinite trial to ascertain whether an extended retirement would disrupt administration.

Cuepacs president N. Siva Subramaniam said the congress would meet the PSD this month to give input on the proposed changes to the NRS.

Cuepacs, he said, in a meeting with Samsudin and the PSD, was also told that the matter on the matrix salary system was being seriously studied.

"We are confident the matter would be resolved by July," he said, adding that Cuepacs had asked for the system, which was Cuepacs' main grouse, to be done away with.

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