

■ **NRS:** Restructured scheme soon

PM: It will be

1991 - 5 JUN 2002

transparent, merit based

■ **By Firdaus Abdullah**
firdy@nstp.com.my

PUTRAJAYA, Tues. — The country's one million civil servants may soon get a restructured New Remuneration Scheme with a more equitable formula for promotions.

The Government is expected to announce a transparent and merit-based scheme which will also reward excellent service.

The new structure will benefit a much larger number of civil servants than the present three-tiered system, which rewards only about five per cent of them annually.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who heads the Cabinet Committee on Public Sector Employees Salaries and Posts, today said he would make the announcement on the revised NRS as soon as possible.

He said officials of the Public Service Department briefed the Cabinet committee today on the revision. With due attention to certain counter-proposals from the committee, the PSD would make the necessary adjustments and resubmit it.

"We heard and studied their (PSD) proposals today and the committee made several decisions which I cannot announce yet because there are also several counter-proposals.

"I am waiting for the PSD to forward the revision and the Cabinet committee has given me the mandate to study the revision and decide," he said when asked by reporters to comment on the PSD briefing.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Finance Minister, was speaking to the media after attending the

fourth pre-Budget dialogue at his department here. The final meeting between Cuepacs and the PSD to fine-tune the scheme and finalise the formula for promotions, was held last week.

The umbrella body for civil service unions has met with the PSD four times since last year to study and improve the NRS, which caused much disgruntlement in the civil service.

Cuepacs president Datuk N. Siva Subramaniam said today the long-awaited decision on the scheme would be an important step towards cultivating a knowledge-based workforce.

"We will wait for Dr Mahathir's announcement. The one million-odd civil servants, including the police and armed forces, have full confidence in the Prime Minister as he has handled three major salary reports and revamps since 1972.

"We trust his wisdom, whatever the decision may be," Siva said.

He, however, declined to reveal details of the revised scheme agreed upon by Cuepacs and the PSD.

The pressing issues that civil servants hope will be resolved include the controversial matrix salary schedule implemented in 1992, under which only five per cent of civil servants are eligible for vertical and diagonal salary movements each year.

Cuepacs had earlier demanded that the matrix system be scrapped, claiming that it disappointed and frustrated 95 per cent of civil servants.

□ TURN TO PAGE 2, COL 4

HR department to assess employees

□ FROM PAGE 1

Instead, Cuepacs proposed that the NRS be replaced with the Single Salary System, which it considered more transparent, systematic and conducive to efficiency and productivity. The PSD, although not in favour of scrapping the three-tier salary scheme, was willing to improve on it.

It is understood that, last week, the PSD had agreed in principle to replace the three-tier system with a two-tier system.

It was also learnt that the revised scheme would provide for the creation of a Human Resource Department at every ministry to develop more transparent annual assessments with an emphasis on merit and excellence.

The HR department would also devise periodic skills and knowledge tests for civil servants, with the prospect of better salaries, bonuses and pensions for those who excel.