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Go for SSM, civil servants urged

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The 985,967 government employees undecided over the Malaysian Remuneration System (SSM) and the New Remuneration System (SSB) have been advised by Cuepacs to opt for the SSM.

All civil servants have been given one month from Oct 1 to make their choice.

It is learnt that some were worried they would lose existing benefits such as the remuneration awards of melintang (horizontal) and menegak (vertical) if they switched.

Cuepacs president Datuk N. Siva Subramaniam said he had directed all the unions to advise their members to exercise their option by opting for SSM while pending negotiation with the Public Service Department on the issue of benefits.

"Cuepacs will meet PSD director-general Tan Sri Jamaluddin Ahmad Damanhuri soon to finalise details of SSM. Cuepacs will also raise the issue of melintang and menegak, especially on time base promotions and other issues," he told the New Straits Times today.

He said Cuepacs was confident PSD would consider its proposals, including incorporating the melintang and menegak awards in SSM.

The 985,967 civil servants, including those in the armed forces and police, will start receiving their option letters from the PSD before the end of the month.

The civil servants will be given only one chance to make a choice. A retraction is not allowed.

Employees who fail to make a choice or to return the option letters to their heads of department by Oct 31 will be deemed as having rejected the offer and will remain in their present scheme.

They will also be considered as having rejected the option if the letters are returned with amendments or objections.

Government employees are now serving under two schemes - SSB introduced a decade ago and the Cabinet Committee Salary System established in 1976.

When the SSB was introduced, some 2,000 civil servants opted to remain under the Cabinet Committee Salary System.

The SSM, which replaces the SSB on Nov 1, was announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on July 29.

Under the SSM, annual performance will no longer be in the hands of heads of department. Instead, ex-aminations and courses, annual assessment reports and recommendations from heads of department will determine advancement.

Compared to the SSB, the SSM is better as weaknesses under the old system had been corrected.

Siva Subramaniam said Cuepacs would also set up a service centre to explain to its members on SSM and its intended meeting with PSD.

Siva Subramaniam, who is also secretary-general of National Union of the Teaching Profession, has appealed to the Finance Ministry to look into paying full salary for teachers pursuing degree courses.

At present, teachers pursuing degree courses receive half pay, forcing many to have financial woes.

There are some 250,000 teachers of whom 70 per cent are non-graduates.

"If teachers are to meet the 2012 government target of all teachers being graduates, then their plight should also be looked into," he said.

Currently, some 10,000 teachers are pursuing various degree courses.

