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PM to unveil details of NRS tomorrow

M. K. Megan

PUTRAJAYA, Sat. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will announce details of the restructured New Remuneration System for civil servants on Monday following Cabinet approval last Wednesday.

Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Samsuddin Osman said today it would be a much improved system.

"The system will still be on but will be a much improved and a positive one," he told reporters after witnessing Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi flagging off the Kembara Merdeka 2002 event at Dataran Putra here today.

He this after being asked if there was a proposal for the NRS to be scrapped in the wake of criticism alleging that it gave room for favouritism.

He declined to elaborate on the restructured NRS but said Dr Mahathir would provide the details.

It was recently reported that civil servants may soon get a restructured New Remuneration Scheme with a more equitable formula for promotions.

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

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

The restructured system is expected to be a transparent and merit-based scheme which will also reward excellent service. It was learnt that the new structure will benefit more civil servants than the present three-tiered system, which rewards about five per cent of them annually.

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 system be scrapped, claiming that it disappointed and frustrated 95 per cent of civil servants.

Instead, Cuepacs had proposed that the NRS be replaced with the Single Salary System, which it considered more transparent, systematic and conducive to efficiency and productivity.

Meanwhile, the Kembara Merdeka 2002 has been designed to re-instil and spread the patriotic spirit as the country approaches its 45th year of independence.

The programme, organised by the Information Department, is seeking to sow and nurture the spirit and appreciation for the development and prosperity of the nation.

The Kembara Merdeka programme was inaugurated last year and this year's theme is "Jalur Gemilang - Dekat Di Mata, Dekat Di Hati".