

12 SEP 2003

Budget-Bonus

HALF-MONTH BONUS FOR CIVIL SERVANTS

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 12 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today announced the payment of a half-month bonus for the almost one million civil servants.

The good news was disclosed by the Prime Minister when tabling the 2004 Budget, his last as Finance Minister, at the Dewan Rakyat here.

The budget presentation was carried live by local television stations.

When tabling the 2003 Budget in September last year, Dr Mahathir announced a one-month bonus or a minimum payment of RM1,200 for all government employees.

Government servants had earlier received a half-month bonus this year, which was provided for in the RM7.3 billion new strategy package unveiled by Dr Mahathir on May 21.

The stimulus package was drawn up to help the country face global uncertainties and minimise the effects of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak and the Iraq war, which had adversely affected several sectors.

Dr Mahathir said the government was also concerned with the situation of civil servants without immediate beneficiaries and who died before their retirement as they could not enjoy their pension.

To ensure that the beneficiaries also enjoyed similar benefits of pensioners with immediate beneficiaries, the government would extend the derivative pension benefits, apart from gratuity, to either one of their parents, he said.

In appreciation of the services of those involved in defending the country, the government would extend free medical treatment facilities to ex-Sarawak Ranger personnel and their wives as well as the wives of ex-personnel of Force 136 and the British Army, he said.

"The government will also extend to them the benefits of hospital ward charges currently provided to families of ex-reserve personnel of Malaysian Armed Forces," Dr Mahathir said.

-- BERNAMA

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