

RM1,500 minimum wage for Selangor gov't firms

Malaysiakini.com

November 9 ,2011

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Selangor today beat the federal government in a race to implement a minimum wage policy, with a pledge to pay RM1,500 as the basic salary for a worker in state-owned companies, from next year.

Menteri Besar Abdul Khalid Ibrahim announced this in his speech when tabling the Selangor state budget for next year in the state assembly today.

Khalid said employees of financially stable state-owned companies will be the first beneficiaries of the policy before it is expanded.

These companies include Perbadanan Kemajuan Negeri Selangor (PKNS), Perbadanan Kemajuan Pertanian Selangor (PKPS), Permodalan Negeri Selangor Berhad (PNSB) and Worldwide Holdings Bhd.

As for companies with an unstable financial status, Khalid said, the state government would provide RM10 million to support the increase in wages.

In contrast, the federal government is still far from implementing a minimum wage policy, which trade unionists and Pakatan Rakyat claim as necessary to deal with poverty and help the country tackle an increasingly evident middle-income trap.

'Not a handout'

Speaking at a press conference later, Khalid denied that the policy was a handout.

"We do not want giveaways, their productivity must support their income."

This, Khalid said, would be made possible by giving employees training to ensure that their productivity would be worth the RM1,500 that to be paid to them.

The minimum wage fund is drawn from the newly set-up Selangorku Grant totalling RM300 million under the state's Budget 2012 and will be managed by Perbadanan Menteri Besar (MBI).

The sum, Khalid said, is from dividend contributions from the state's government-linked companies (GLCs) and profits from the MBI.

"After four years of reforming (Selangor GLCs)... we believe the time is right for the fruits from a clean and transparent administration to be given to the people of Selangor."

The minimum wage policy is one of 17 new programmes under the SelangorKu grant.

Under the grant, RM10 million is also allocated for corruption eradication which would include training, legal assistance and rewards for whistleblowers, and another RM5 million is allocated for its Strengthening Democracy Programme.

"(This is to) strengthen a free and fair electoral system which would includes awareness activities and training for election volunteers and observers," said Khalid.

Other programmes include:

- * Strengthening women programme - RM30 million
- * From Welfare to Working Programme - RM20 million

- * Young entrepreneur programme - RM30 million
- * Education support programme - RM30 million
- * Infrastructure development - RM50 million
- * Sports infrastructure development - RM30 million
- * Environment conservation - RM5 million
- * Equipping rural areas with modern technology - RM10 million
- * Improving bureaucracy - RM10 million
- * Strengthening culture - RM3 million
- * State information programme - RM10 million
- * Improving quality of life programme - RM5 million
- * Improving public servants' skills programme - RM 5million
- * Rural development - RM22 million

The 17 projects totalling RM300 million is an addition to the RM1.6 billion budget that was tabled in the state assembly.

The programmes, Khalid said, are intended to share the profits of GLCs with the rakyat.

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