

**Guan Eng: Najib's minimum wage far below Penang's**  
**MalaysiaKini.com**  
**May 01, 2012**

Prime Minister Najib Razak has been criticised for setting the minimum wage far below the level of RM1,100 per month for the peninsular and RM900 for Sabah and Sarawak as suggested by Pakatan Rakyat.

For Penang, said Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, the state has achieved the minimum monthly wage of RM1,100 (including allowances and cost of living) but excluding overtime.

Staff in all state agencies and government-linked companies including the local councils get much more than RM1,100 monthly, he added.

Last year, the lowest paid road sweepers and drain cleaners were given an extra monthly incentive of RM150, stressed Lim, during his speech at a May Day celebration in Prai today.

"However, the minimum wage alone will not bring about a higher standard of living nor economic growth but may instead bring about inflation," said the DAP secretary-general.

"To bring about economic prosperity and a higher standard of living requires a RM1,100 minimum wage.

"This needs to be accompanied by structural reforms in our economy, higher productivity jobs, and increasing women participation in the workforce," he stressed.

Lim was referring to Najib's announcement on the wage system in conjunction with the Workers' Day today which the premier said was a gift from the federal government to the country's workers.

He set RM900 for workers in Peninsular Malaysia, and RM800 for Sabah and Sarawak as the minimum monthly wage.

Sore need for structural economic reforms

Meanwhile, Lim said the country was in sore need of structural economic reforms to make it more competitive, transparent, efficient and reduce leakages caused by wastage and corruption.

Structural economic reforms such as open competitive tenders, full disclosure of contracts and the declaration of personal assets of ministers as well as a performance-based delivery system must be carried out, he added.

Lim said creating more higher productivity jobs depended on the excellence of our education system.

The denial syndrome by Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Muhyiddin Yassin (right) that Malaysian education system is in crisis is only surpassed by his "false sense of hubris" that our education system is superior to Germany, United Kingdom and United States, he added.

"Unless we can inject merit and performance back into our education system, Malaysia risks being left behind by neighbouring countries such as Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam.

"Increasing women's participation in the work force may be facilitated by a minimum wage.

"But expanding and deepening women's participation to higher levels of expertise can only be achieved

when there is no gender discrimination in salaries and promotion opportunities," he stressed.

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