

PSM: Why MPs get a pay hike but not workers?

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Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) today slammed Putrajaya for choosing to push through a pay hike for lawmakers instead of increasing the minimum wage of workers.

PSM spokesperson S Tinagaran urged the government to increase the current minimum wage of RM900 to RM1,500, following a RM9,500 pay increase for MPs.

He was referring to the Members of Parliament (Remuneration) (Amendment) Bill 2014 which was passed by Parliament in the wee hours of Friday, raising lawmakers' salary from RM6,508.59 to RM16,000.

"The government is still capable of increasing the parliamentarians' salaries when it says that the Goods and Services Tax (GST) is implemented due to shortage of revenue.

"If they have the rationale to increase their salaries, why can't they see the rationale to also increase the minimum wages of the workers?" he told a press conference in Kuala Lumpur today.

He said after GST came into effect on April 1, low-income workers were the hardest hit.

"In every goods and services that they (the workers) purchase, they have to pay for GST. Besides, most traders have also increased the price of their goods," Tinagaran said.

Gov't not serious about increasing workers' wages

Referring to the National Wages Consultative Council (2011) (Act 732), Tinagaran said there should be a review in the minimum wages every two years.

The last review was made in 2013, when the minimum wage of a worker was RM900 in Peninsular Malaysia and RM800 in East Malaysia.

"Nonetheless, four months have passed now and there hasn't been any decision made by the government and the council to increase the minimum wages," he said.

Jaringan Rakyat Tertindas' (Jerit) M Sivaranjani, who was also present at the press conference, questioned the government's commitment to fair minimum wage.

She said on March 13, a memorandum asking for an increase of wages has been submitted to the relevant ministry, but to no avail.

She added that Human Resources Minister Richard Riot Jaem (left) has announced during the parliament session on March 12 that the minimum wage of workers would not be

increased.

"This is contradictory (to earlier statements). It is clear that the government is not serious in wanting to increase the minimum wage of workers." she said.

She urged the government to increase the minimum wage in conjunction with Labour Day on May 1.

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