



**No money to give one-month bonus to civil servants
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Prime Minister Najib Razak said today the government could not pay a month's bonus to the 1.2 million civil servants in Budget 2011 because it incurred an expenditure of RM3.1 billion.

As such, he said, the special financial assistance of RM500 for each civil servant was appropriate.

Najib, who is also the finance minister, said many quarters had lobbied to him to announce a month's bonus to the civil servants.

"But I would like to share with you ... that a month's bonus incurs an expenditure of RM3.1 million for the government. Personally, I would want to give a bonus but as a responsible finance minister, I cannot expend more than the national revenue.

"It is for this reason that I gave RM500 as a special financial assistance to civil servants," he said when addressing the 1Malaysia gathering of teachers at the Putra Stadium in Bukit Jalil, here.

When tabling Budget 2011 in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday, Najib announced a special financial assistance of RM500 for all civil servants from Grade 54 and below as well as contract officers and retirees. The payment will be made in December this year.

The prime minister said the aid could help civil servants cope with schooling expenses for their children at the end of the year.

He also said that though no bonus was given, the government had proposed other incentives for civil servants, such as maternity leave of up to 90 days.

This also benefitted women teachers, who made up almost 70 percent of the 400,000 teachers in the country, he said.

"The maternity leave is a gift for women. But they can opt not to take the 90 days. It is up to them."

Financial implications

Under Budget 2011, the government will allow flexibility to self-determine fully-paid maternity leave, not exceeding 90 days from the current 60 days. The facility is subject to a total of 300 days of maternity leave through the tenure of service.

The prime minister also said that the government facilitated civil servants in owning houses as well as improving the terms and conditions for housing loans.

He said it had raised the maximum loan eligibility to RM450,000 compared with the current RM360,000, so that civil servants could buy more expensive houses.

Najib also referred to the various memorandums sent to him to make improvements to the teaching service scheme, and said he needed some time to scrutinise the proposals because

they had financial implications and involved a large number of teachers.

"I have to look at them together with the Public Service Department and the Finance Ministry. There are many proposals. If the government can afford it, I will have discussions with (Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister) Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin ... and an announcement can be made when the time comes," he said.

- Bernama

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