

# Pay rise for civil servants, cops ruled out for now

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**PUTRAJAYA:** Not for now. Policemen and civil servants will not be getting bigger salaries in the immediate future as this will eat into the government's development expenditure.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the government was not yet ready to look into the salary revision as proposed by the police and Cuepacs as it would incur a huge additional allocation.

Abdullah, who is also Internal Security Minister and Finance Minister, added that at this time the Government was not prepared to set aside a huge allocation to meet the proposals.

"The government's financial strength is vital for development. The rakyat wants development... this is more important and should be considered.

"We just cannot tell the people that we do not have the money as we have spent it all on paying salaries," he said when asked

whether the requests by the police and Cuepacs would be looked into.

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Musa Hassan recently said that the wages of some policemen at RM650 put them among the country's hardcore poor.

Musa also said the police were in the midst of drafting a new salary scheme for its members to be submitted to the Cabinet.

Cuepacs, through its salary revision chairman Omar Osman, had also said that a memorandum on pay rise for civil servants would be submitted to Abdullah next month.

Omar, who is also Cuepacs deputy president, said Cuepacs would propose an increase of between 10 and 40 per cent for about 200,000 civil servants in the support group.

Speaking after chairing the Cabinet committee meeting on the appointments and salaries of workers in the public service, Abdullah noted that at least five salary adjustments for civil servants across the board had been

carried out since 2000.

"It is normal for the government to increase the percentage of their salaries each time an adjustment is carried out, sometimes of up to 10 per cent.

"The civil servants are getting more pay from the adjustments."

Abdullah explained that the government had also approved numerous allowances for those doing critical or risky jobs, like the hardship allowance.

"We give them incentives in the form of these allowances and recently, the government approved payment for the Cost of Living Allowance (Cola) for civil servants.

"For Cola and bonuses, the allocation incurred by the Government was RM2.4 billion."

Without salary revision, their salaries were already high, he stressed.

Abdullah added that any salary revision would require the government to set aside a huge allocation.

"The proposal by Cuepacs alone, if approved, will incur an additional allocation of RM6 bil-

lion, and this does not include pensions."

For now, the government was not ready to look into the request by police for a salary revision. "We have looked into their salaries and allowances. Their basic, no doubt, is small but with the allowances, the amount they are getting is higher than other civil servants in the same service scheme.

"But we will look into whether (there is a need) for another adjustment for the police," he added.

Abdullah said the service of a policeman was not comparable with the others in the public service. "We will not forget (the request made) and the PSD will look at a broader perspective on what needs to be done in terms of salary adjustment. But for now, what I can say is that the allowances plus the salary they are getting are not that low."

He also said staggered working hours would be extended to other states to create better communication and boost efficiency between civil servants serving the federal and state governments.