

No hike!

Cabinet: Police and civil servants won't get pay rise

by **R. Manirajan** and **B. Suresh Ram**
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

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PUTRAJAYA: The government has shot down the request by Cuepacs and the police force for a salary revision. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad said yesterday the government is not ready to pay higher salaries now as available funds are needed for development.

Responding to questions on the requests made by Cuepacs and the police, he said: "We can't say we don't have the money to pay the salary... we can't say that, but from the point of adjustment, we will consider from time to time."

"Recently, we gave an adjustment, including the cost of living allowance (Cola) which amounted to RM2.4 billion, including bonus."

Abdullah said agreeing to Cuepacs' request would cost an

additional RM6 billion to the government, and this excludes pension.

Speaking after chairing a three-hour closed-door cabinet committee meeting on appointment and salary of civil servants, he acknowledged that policemen earn a low basic pay, but said they get more than some civil servants in certain categories if their allowances are taken into account.

"What is important is their take-home pay. To revise the salary of all civil servants is a very big exercise," he said.

Abdullah, who is also finance minister, said that from 2000 to 2002, the government approved at least five salary adjustments and there was a 10% increment across the board.

However, he said, the police's role was different from other sectors and he would ask the Public Services Department to look into it.

In an immediate response, Cuepacs asked the government to reconsider its decision. Its president, Nordin Abdul Hamid, said it is seeking between 10% and 40% more, and will benefit the support groups whose salary has not been reviewed for 16 years.

He said he was surprised by the rejection because Cuepacs had yet to submit the detailed proposal.

The meeting also discussed ways to implement working hours in stages between the federal government and the governments in states which have Friday/Saturday weekends. Abdullah said the decision was important to improve communications and expedite development plans, as communication was poor three days in a week.

"We are suggesting certain officers be placed on duty during days off. The PSD has finalised the schedule and will discuss with the state governments."