

Pay rise will address gap between the ranks

NST- 8/5/2007.

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PUTRAJAYA: A salary increase is in store for the country's 1.2 million civil servants.

The amount is already in the final stages of being worked out by the Public Service Department.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said yesterday the time had come for a salary revision for civil servants, both in the support and management categories, because they deserved it.

"It is only appropriate for the salary to be increased but the question is how much. It is up to Tan Sri (Ismail Adam who is PSD director-general) to make the recommendations.

"When the time comes, an announcement will be made," he told civil servants attending a Prime Minister's Department gathering.

"I chose to talk about this today because you (civil servants) do not want to hear about anything else."

The revision, Abdullah said, should consider many aspects, particularly the gap between higher- and lower-ranking officers.

"This should be deeply analysed and considered. We do not want such a big gap as the high cost of living has been affecting everyone, especially the lower-income groups."

Abdullah also reminded civil servants to always remember that the public service delivery system needed to be improved further.

The people would be satisfied only if civil servants could work faster and function more efficiently.

"Don't just deal with 10 files when there are heaps of other files on your table.

"It becomes our duty and responsibility to pay serious attention to our work.

"Serve the people faster, efficiently and in all fairness. This should be the goal for all of us. With this, the country's develop-

ment will continue to be dynamic and we can achieve what we have set out to do."

Earlier this year, the Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Service (Cuepacs) had proposed a pay increment of between 10 and 40 per cent.

The congress had proposed a rise of 40 per cent for support group II (Grades 1 to 16), which makes up the lowest category of public employees, and an increase of 30 per cent for support group I (Grades 17 to 26 and Grades 27 to 40).

For the management and professional group (Grades 41 to 54), Cuepacs had proposed an increase of 20 per cent and for the premier grade of the public sector, a salary rise of 10 per cent.

Cuepacs president Omar Osman, when contacted by the *New Straits Times*, praised Abdullah, saying the latter had always been sensitive towards the plight of civil servants, especially those in the support category.

Omar said he met the prime minister during the Labour Day celebration and the latter, in his speech, dropped hints of a pay rise for civil servants.

"When we met after the event, PM told me that civil servants must work harder for the good of the country and the government if their salary is increased."

Omar said Cuepacs leaders had gone to a few states, including Kelantan, to motivate civil servants to perform better.

"With the pay rise in the air, it is only fair for all civil servants to give our prime minister the assurance and commitment that we will do our job, faster and more efficiently, the quality work that our PM has always asked for.

"We do not want workers to remain stagnant and unproductive although their salaries have been increased. This will not be fair to the people and the government. Stop coming late for work but strive to maintain a good image and discipline."