

FRESH GRAD PAY TO BE REVIEWED NEXT WEEK

Salary and allowance scheme for civil servants will also be discussed, says PM

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THE salary of fresh graduates will be among the matters discussed in a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim next week.

Anwar said Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Zuki Ali had scheduled a committee to review the salary and allowance scheme for civil servants to convene next week.

He said as per tradition, the salary and allowance scheme of civil servants would be reviewed every 10 years.

"It has been 12 years and the committee has not met. All this — salary of fresh graduates and salary and allowance scheme of civil servants — will be taken into account during the meeting," he said here yesterday.

Anwar said the salary of civil servants, including the police and the armed forces, was low.

"*Insyallah*, all this will be taken into consideration, depending

on the country's economy. It will be increased in stages," he added.

On Friday, Economy Minister Rafizi Ramli stressed the need for a policy that ensured the minimum wage was not used as starting pay for skilled workers.

He said the minimum wage of RM1,500 was set as a benchmark for unskilled workers, which means fresh graduates and young professionals should be paid more.

He added that statistics showed the wages for skilled workers were being dragged down because the minimum wage was used as a starting point for fresh graduates and skilled workers.

Meanwhile, Anwar also touched on Pas secretary-general Datuk Seri Takiyuddin Hassan's claim that the Perikatan Nasional (PN) wave in the state elections indicated that the unity government would lose power.

Anwar, who is Pakatan Harapan (PH) chairman, brushed off the claim as "a political statement".

He said the response he received at his visit to Kedah on Friday was "extraordinarily good".

"Never mind, that is a political statement. That (extraordinarily good response in Kedah) cannot be denied.

"Ultimately, the decision is for the people to make, whether they want stable politics that reject extreme views and can drive the

country's economic growth.

He was also asked to comment on Pas' apology to Gerakan president Datuk Dominic Lau over an incident where the latter was asked to leave a PN ceramah.

"There are many more things Pas should apologise for," he said.

Anwar, in Kedah on Friday, praised his deputy, Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, for his bravery in defending Umno as a party that fought for independence.

He said Zahid continued fighting for Umno despite facing charges in court, unlike other party members who had left.

"His attitude and integrity should be appreciated. The co-operation between PH and BN should be strengthened for the harmony of the unity government. There are people who despise Zahid. Yes, he is facing a court case, but we cannot deny that he has courage.

"(It is different with) other (people). If (former prime minister) Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad ordered for Umno to be closed (dissolved), and if it is not closed, there will be (action) taken (against that person).

"But Zahid replied that it cannot be dissolved because Umno is a party for Malays and it has history with a national struggle.

"I salute him for that," Anwar said at the Jelajah Perpaduan Madani Alor Star event in Alor Mengkudu.