

SALARY INCREMENT

BE PATIENT OVER PAY RISE, PM TELLS CUEPACS

Doing so will raise deficit, investors will lose confidence in govt, says Anwar

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has asked civil servants to be patient over calls for a salary increment.

He said the government had tried its utmost best to allocate assistance for civil servants under the revised 2023 Budget on Friday.

“They had asked that their salaries be reviewed and raised. I agree with that, but there was no stern approach towards the issue that we faced previously.

“The nation’s debt has reached almost RM1 trillion with a deficit of 5.6 per cent, and if we increase salaries, the deficit will increase to 6.5 per cent.

“This will cause no investment in the country as investors will not be confident that Malaysia has a strong political will to better

manage the country,” he said after attending a seminar themed “Islamophobia International Forum: A Meaningful Engagement Through Madani Discourse”.

Anwar said this in response to the disappointment expressed by the Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Services (Cuepacs) over the lack of solutions presented to tackle the rising cost of living faced by civil servants in the budget.

Cuepacs president Datuk Adnan Mat had said reducing individual income tax would not have a significant impact on the people’s income, especially civil servants.

He said civil servants wanted a new remuneration system as the current one had not been reviewed since November 2002 and was not suitable for the current economic environment.

Anwar said he also needed to take care of the hardcore poor categories, such as fishermen and farmers.

“I am aware that politics can cause different understandings among us. However, it is not easy for me as I need to also focus on farmers, fishermen and so on as they struggle to make ends meet.

“We feel that we are at a disadvantage, but there are people

who are facing an even tougher life to survive.”

On Friday, Anwar tabled the revised 2023 Budget with an allocation of RM388.1 billion.

Among the initiatives announced for civil servants included early redemption of cash instead of accumulated leave of up to 50 per cent with a maximum of 90 days, as well as a provision of special Aidilfitri financial assistance of RM700 each to all civil servants in Grade 56 and below.

In an immediate reply, Adnan said Cuepacs was only expressing its opinion and that Anwar’s decision to not raise salaries was understandable.

“We accept the prime minister’s decision with an open heart and are confident that the prime minister has his own way of taking care of civil servants’ well-being,” he said.

Adnan added that civil servants would continue to provide their undivided service in supporting and implementing government policies.

“We will continue to provide undivided service in supporting policies implemented by the government, especially the core pillar put forth by the prime minister for the benefit of the nation and its people,” he said.