

## **CIVIL SERVANTS' WAGE INCREASE**

# 'Govt balancing pay of low-, high-grade workers'

**PUTRAJAYA:** The more than 13 per cent increase in wages for civil servants from December is part of the government's efforts to strike a balance between the pay of low- and high-grade workers, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said in contrast with the approach taken by previous administrations, this move aimed to raise the pay of the lower-income group and reduce the growth of the high-income group.

"Those in the lower (pay) scale may see a 25 to 30 per cent increase.

"I am prioritising the lower (pay) segment and reducing those in the higher wage segment," he said during the *Soal Jawab Perdana Menteri* programme with four television stations that aired last night.

The almost hour-long interview was conducted by RTM presenter Sayed Munawar Sayed Mustar, Bernama TV's Pasha Abdul Rahim, Awani's Muhammad Zulfitri Yusof and TV3's Azaria Tagaya.

Anwar said the pay increase for civil servants involved only the

basic pay, not allowances, and cabinet would refine details before approving it.

"Although a pay increase of 35 per cent was introduced before, it only involved Grades 1 to 16. As a whole, this increase is still among the highest, involving a huge cost of almost RM10 billion," said Anwar, who is also finance minister.

Describing the Labour Day announcement as an appreciation of civil servants' contributions to the country, Anwar said he wanted civil servants to boost their productivity in line with the pay increase.

"It is hoped this will spur civil servants to be more hardworking and end laziness and leakages.

"The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, police and Inland Revenue Board must be more strict in managing possible issues or leakages in government departments.

"All ministries must monitor, so that from this month on, we can see improvement in all aspects. The public shouldn't have to wait in line for hours, wait a long time for licence approvals. There must be efficiency and



*Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim speaking during the 'Soal Jawab Perdana Menteri' programme that aired on television last night. BERNAMA PIC*

change. I am hoping for something better.”

On another matter, Anwar said though he and the government were open to criticism, there would be no compromise on parties that stir up the three R's — royalty, religion and race.

He said the freedom of speech enshrined in the Constitution did not constitute freedom to insult and degrade anyone at will.

“The Malay rulers, through a consensus, asked the government to be more strict in curbing this as they feel it is unjust. They are attacked and yet they cannot respond.

“Everyone talks about upholding Malay rights, even the parties are Malay parties, yet they insult the Malay rulers.

“I will not compromise with

those who break this law.

“The police will be strict and I will ask the attorney-general to study the issue and bring them to court.”

He said the government would not tolerate anybody who went after the royal institution, citing as an example reports about the alleged involvement of royals in the setting up of a casino.

Anwar, in his speech at the national Labour Day celebration in Putrajaya yesterday, said anyone who linked him and the government to supposed discussions on introducing a casino licence for Forest City, Johor, should face the full brunt of the law.

He said His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim, King of Malaysia had never expressed to him any wish to set up a casino in Forest City.