

**Mind the gap, says Cuepacs in 'wage-increase' row**  
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**By Shannon Teoh**

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 9 — Civil service unions are not upset with top-ranking government officials' wages but are concerned about the gulf separating the top with the rest in the 1.4 million-strong public service.

The Malaysian Insider had reported last month that under the new Public Service Remuneration Scheme (SBPA), 36 top-tier civil servants in the "Premier Service" category will earn a basic salary of RM36,000 per month while those in lower pay grades receive increment as low as RM1.70.

The Chief Secretary to the Government will get RM60,000 a month under the scheme that Cuepacs says was drawn up without its involvement.

"They are very comfortable earning RM35,000 or more. We are not angry but we must close up the gap," Cuepacs president Datuk Omar Osman told reporters today.

The chief of the umbrella body for public service unions also said Cuepacs has formed a special action committee that will give input on how to bridge this divide.

Cuepacs had said yesterday it will table a five-point proposal paper to the special task force reviewing the SBPA on Feb 22.

The proposal ignited anger and disapproval in the 1.4 million civil service — a key vote bank for the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition — ahead of a general election that must be called by May 2013.

The five demands are reviewing the principle of salary transfer of government servants on Grade 54 and below, retaining a staff member's seniority in the Malaysian Remuneration Scheme (SSM), reviewing the maximum salary scale, listing government servants who are eligible to get a pay increase of up to 13 percent, and reviewing the structuring of salary increases of all grades.

The committee will have up to April 16 to review the SBPA.

The 2012 Budget allocated RM64.1 billion for the wages and pensions of government employees or 28 per cent of the entire Budget, up from RM36.9 billion five years ago.

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