

Priority given to all stakeholders in pay review, says Muhyiddin
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 8 — Maintaining the Malaysian Remuneration System (SSM) will ensure that priority is given all stakeholders in the civil service, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said today.

The deputy prime minister defended Putrajaya's decision to scrap the controversial Public Service Remuneration Scheme (SBPA), saying that improving the current system was a "better" choice.

"The guarantee of pay adjustments is interesting; it will satisfy all officers within the civil service," he told reporters.

Asked to explain why the government decided to do away with the SBPA, Muhyiddin (picture) said the decision was made after consulting unions such as Cuepacs.

"The SBPA was a suggestion made by the Public Service Department... we realised that some things might have to be amended that is why before the announcement we set up a committee.

"We needed input from unions like Cuepacs, who have said the new scheme was not appropriate," he said.

He stressed that there was "nothing wrong" if the government were to scrap a new scheme if "weaknesses" were identified.

Datuk Seri Najib Razak announced today the scrapping of his administration's controversial pay scheme that had been criticised for only benefiting top government servants while leaving the majority of the civil service with paltry salary hikes.

The prime minister said the existing SSM would be maintained with improvements in place of the SBPA that was introduced on January 1.

Under the "improved" SSM, Najib announced that the salaries of the Chief Secretary to the Government and top-tier civil servants in the "Premier Service I" (Turus I) category would only be adjusted by seven per cent.

Civil servants in the management and professional groups and Grades 1 to 54, in turn, would see their salaries hiked by 13 per cent across the board, he said.

It was revealed recently that under the SBPA, the Chief Secretary would draw a salary of RM60,000 while those in the "Premier Service" category were to rake in RM36,000, a vast difference from those in the lower pay grades, some of whom were only given increments as low as RM1.70.

The revelation following the obvious disparity between the salaries of top civil servants and those in the lower grades had ignited anger and disapproval in the 1.4 million-strong civil

service — a key vote bank for the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition — ahead of a general election that must be called by March 2013.

Najib also announced that civil servants in the Superscale Grade (Gred Utama) and Special Grades A, B and C would have their salaries adjusted by nine per cent while those in Premier Scale II and III would be hiked by eight per cent.

He said the government would also form a special commission comprising members from many “important parties” that will be tasked to review in a “comprehensive and holistic” manner all aspects on how to improve the country’s civil service.

The prime minister had ordered a review of the pay scheme after government unions raised an outcry over the quantum of increase.

A panel was then formed on January 15 to look into the many concerns raised by civil servants and was given a three-month deadline to issue its recommendations to the government.

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