

PKR moots mandatory civil service wage reviews every 5 years
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PETALING JAYA, Feb 23 — Putrajaya should make wage reviews within the civil service compulsory once every five years, PKR said today.

"Keadilan urges that wage reviews be made mandatory every five years, so that (wage) increases in line with inflation rates can be done fairly," PKR vice-president Nurul Izzah Anwar told reporters here.

She said that according to a 2006 United Nations Public Administration Network Public Service report, Malaysia had the biggest income gap between the highest and lowest paid civil servants compared to neighbouring countries.

"The gap is 19.5:1. This means the highest paid civil servant earns 19.5 more than the lowest paid one. Keadilan wants the gap to be lessened, and is willing to work with all parties to realise this," said Nurul Izzah.

She said PKR supported Cuepacs' demand that the government give a pay rise of between RM700 to RM2,500 for Grade 1 to Grade 54 civil servants under the existing structure before implementing any changes under the Public Service Remuneration Scheme (SBPA).

The Lembah Pantai MP stressed that, under Pakatan Rakyat (PR)'s 2012 alternative budget, the coalition had promised that minimum wage would be set at RM1,100 for all civil servants should they take over Putrajaya.

"Pakatan Rakyat is committed towards building a more equal pay scheme with our proposed minimum wage, besides the RM500 monthly incentive for teachers as promised in the Buku Jingga policy book," she added.

The government is facing a massive headache in trying to unwind the new controversial SBPA that appears to benefit top government officials but leaves the majority of the 1.4 million-strong civil service with a pittance in pay increase, which could have adverse effects for the ruling coalition in a general election.

The Malaysian Insider understands that Putrajaya wants to completely overhaul the seemingly top-heavy scheme but many of the estimated 2,000 senior civil servants have already signed and consented to the new scheme, which guarantees a pay rise of some RM5,000 a month.

Alternatively, the scheme could incur an additional RM2 billion a year if the government attempts to put more money into pockets of mid- and lower-level civil servants who did not get a good pay jump. The new Public Service Remuneration Scheme (SBPA) had initially cost the government an extra RM2.6 billion a year.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had said last month that civil servants should rest assured that the government will resolve the gulf in pay increases under the SBPA, with a

review panel led by former Public Service Department director-general Tan Sri Ismail Adam. The panel, which also includes Cuepacs, the umbrella labour centre for government servants, has up to April 16 to conclude its review.

The proposed pay structure, which sees the highest pay at RM60,000 a month for the Chief Secretary to the Government while those in lower pay grades would receive an increment as low as RM1.70, has 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 May 2013.

The Malaysian Insider understands the new pay scheme was drawn up without Cuepacs' involvement.

It is learnt that under the SBPA, 36 top-tier civil servants in the "Premier Service" category will earn a basic salary of RM36,000 per month.

Cuepacs deputy president (I) Azih Muda had confirmed the information with The Malaysian Insider, saying the details were stated as such on the official government circular.

Cuepacs had previously demanded the government delay the implementation of the new pay scheme after complaining that it was not consulted on the matter.

The opposition has also criticised the government for allowing an unfair income disparity among different segments of the civil service.

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