

Nurul Izzah: SBPA volte face shows BN ignores stakeholders
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 8 — Putrajaya's move to axe the new civil service pay scheme shows Barisan Nasional's (BN) failure to engage with stakeholders before making policy, Nurul Izzah Anwar said today.

While the PKR vice-president welcomed the government's decision to get rid of the new Public Service Remuneration Scheme (SBPA), she noted that BN still seemed oblivious of the big wage gap between the lowest- and highest-paid civil servants.

This will put pressure on civil servants between Grades 1 and 54, she stressed, pointing out that those at the bottom of the current pay scale earned about 19.5 times less than those at the top.

Nurul Izzah (picture) said the existing Malaysian Remuneration System (SSM) should be revamped to ensure a more equitable wage scheme that prioritises the needs of those in the lower pay grades, who comprise the majority of the civil service.

The SSM should strive to cut the current wage gap by ensuring that junior civil servants get at least RM1,100 a month as proposed in Pakatan Rakyat's shadow Budget for 2012, she said.

But the Lembah Pantai MP said that at the same time, the SSM must be made more comprehensive and include plans on how to increase productivity after talks are held with all affected parties.

"The SSM must take into account several principles of performance evaluation and service standards, including efforts to reduce wastage and corruption through the use of the Whistleblower Act and rewards for reporting on financial abuse in government," she said in a statement.

She added that the SSM should be put under interim review every five years and a full review every 10 years, which must involve all stakeholders.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak announced today his administration will scrap the controversial SBPA, which has been criticised for only benefiting top government servants while leaving the majority of the civil service with paltry salary hikes.

Instead, the existing SSM will be kept in place with new improvements, he told a special gathering of civil servants in Putrajaya.

News that top civil servants would get hefty pay hikes while those in lower pay grades would receive increments as low as RM1.70 had ignited anger 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.

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

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