

**PM: RM6b allocated for civil service pay hikes**  
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**By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, March 10 — Putrajaya has set aside RM6 billion to finance the new salary adjustments mooted under its recently-revamped civil service remuneration scheme.

The allocation includes civil servants' cost of living allowances (COLA), which were also hiked following Datuk Seri Najib Razak's announcement on Thursday to scrap the controversial Public Service Remuneration Scheme (SBPA), Sinar Harian reported today.

"We want civil servants to receive salary adjustments of between seven and 13 per cent up to Grade 54.

"To do this, we had to prepare additional allocation, which we estimate to be over RM6 billion in total, but the actual amount is yet to be determined," the newspaper quoted the prime minister as saying after officiating the Taman Moleh religious school in Johor Baru yesterday.

According to the Malay daily, Najib (picture) had also dismissed Pakatan Rakyat (PR) de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's claim that the government's decision to scrap SBPA was due to pressure from the opposition.

Instead, the prime minister pointed out that during his Budget 2012 speech last October, his administration had already announced the seven to 13 per cent salary rise for civil servants.

However, Najib, who is also finance minister, had only allocated RM2 billion for pay hikes for the 1.3 million public sector employees who are traditionally a Barisan Nasional vote bank.

On Thursday, Najib said his administration would scrap the SBPA, which has 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 Malaysian Remuneration System (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 civil service ahead of a general election that must be called by May 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.

"Any proposal by the panel will be considered and implemented according to the government's ability," he said.

Apart from the salary hikes, Najib said the SSM's pay structure would be altered from the matrix pay schedule (JGM) to the "minimum-maximum" pay schedule with an annual wage increase fixed between RM80 and RM320 for those in Grades 1 to 4.

The prime minister also announced that COLA for those in Areas B and C would be hiked by RM50 respectively.

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

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