

Govt weighing Raya bonus payout

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By M. HAMZAH JAMALUDIN AND FAHIRUL N. RAMLI

HOPE FOR THE BEST: Najib says govt checking to see if it can give a treat to its 1.4 million workers

PEKAN: THE government will consider giving a Hari Raya Aidilfitri bonus to 1.4 million civil servants, depending on its financial capability. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said a decision would be made after the government checked its buku kira-kira (accounts).

Asked whether the government's present financial status would allow it to pay bonuses to civil servants, Najib who was in a jovial mood, said: "Just wait (for the news) as we are still deliberating on the request and any decision will depend on our ability to pay."

Najib was speaking after presenting the Felda windfall to settlers' wives, jubah (robes) and dates to imam and mosque committee members, aprons to Ramadan stall operators and spectacles to people in his constituency here yesterday.

The Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Services (Cuepacs) president Datuk Omar Osman had recently said it was looking at initiatives to ease the burden of civil servants, including asking the government to consider a Hari Raya Aidilfitri bonus.

Omar was also quoted as saying that Cuepacs would seek the views of relevant authorities before submitting its request.

On claims that more than 50 per cent of the Barisan Nasional candidates for the coming general election in the initial list were rejected, Najib said it was not true as he had yet to finalise the list.

"We will finalise the list when the time comes and everything is speculative now. This includes the list of Umno candidates as we are still scrutinising it."

Najib also said Felda settlers who wanted to buy more Felda Global Ventures Holdings (FGV) shares should get professional assistance, including from Felda, as they had to purchase them in the open market.

Although each settler only received 800 units of FGV shares, Najib said they would get annual dividends from a trust fund which owned 20 per cent of the FGV equity.

A total of 3,350 settlers' wives from Felda Chini received RM5,000 each yesterday, which is the second payment of the RM15,000 windfall for each settler family announced by Najib in May.

Zabidah Majid, 50, of Felda Chini Timur 1, said she planned to buy FGV shares with the money as she was confident that the plantation giant would expand further.

"I will also buy more Koperasi Permodalan Felda shares as my husband has given me the RM5,000 windfall that he received last month," said Zabidah, who hails from Bachok, Kelantan.

Hasnah Zainal, 60, of Felda Chini Timur 2, said her family would seek assistance from Felda on how to invest the money they received.

"For the time being, I will keep the money in my Tabung Haji account," said Hasnah, who also planned to treat her six children and four grandchildren with special buka puasa dishes next week.

Najib spent about an hour visiting food stalls and distributing aprons and caps at Ramadan bazaars in town and in Taman Mentiga near here yesterday.

More than 100 stall operators were grateful to receive the gifts, which had the words Janji Ditepati (promises fulfilled) printed on them.

The prime minister was accompanied by Putera 1Malaysia Club president Datuk Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim and veteran singer Datuk DJ Dave.

Najib and his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, later hosted a breaking of fast ceremony at his residence here, which was attended by Pekan Umno members and local leaders.

At 8.30pm, Najib joined the locals at Pulau Serai mosque for Isyak and Terawih prayers before distributing donations to the poor, senior citizens, orphans and single mothers.

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