

**Sufficient funds for civil service bonuses, BN leaders say**  
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**By Ida Lim**

KUALA LUMPUR, July 26 — The federal government has ensured that there are sufficient funds to give out special bonuses to civil servants, Barisan Nasional (BN) leaders said today.

The prime minister yesterday announced that civil servants will be given a half-month bonus with a minimum of RM500, while government pensioners will get a special RM500 payment.

Datuk Seri Najib Razak had said the bonus payments, which will be handed out by August 9, are based on the government's strong financial position.

"Bonus of half-month is what the government can afford to give. We've taken consideration of government's financial standing. It's ok at the moment," said MCA vice president Datuk Donald Lim Siang Chai in a telephone conversation.

Lim, who is also the deputy finance minister, pointed out that "a lot of private companies' bonuses (are) much higher".

"It's something that the government is able to reward the civil servants," he told The Malaysian Insider when contacted today.

When asked to comment, Umno's Datuk Seri Azmi Khalid said: "Because everyone is getting something, so it's also good to give to the civil servants too."

Najib's administration has been giving out aid to the public through various schemes, including the Bantuan Rakyat 1 Malaysia (BR1M), where one-off payment of RM500 is given to low-income households.

"I am sure the government will have done the calculations. I am sure it is within the government's means to pay. You only pay what you can afford to pay," said Azmi.

In answer to claims that the bonuses may be seen as a vote-buying exercise, the Padang Besar MP also said: "Some people will conclude it's vote-buying. It's up to the population to judge."

Najib had said that it was a token of appreciation by the government to civil servants and government pensioners.

It is estimated that the bonus for civil servants and special payment for government pensioners will cost taxpayers RM2.2 billion.

The 1.27 million civil servants and 657,000 government pensioners are considered an important group of voters, with both BN and Pakatan Rakyat (PR) trying to court them ahead of elections that must be called by next year.

Today, both Selangor and Penang's PR governments announced similar half-month bonuses to civil servants in their states.

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