

Cabinet ministers take 10 per cent pay cut

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PUTRAJAYA, May 23 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today announced that the Cabinet ministers would take a 10 per cent pay cut with immediate effect.

The decision to reduce the salary was made at the first meeting of the new Cabinet at Perdana Putra here, he said.

"We are concerned about the country's financial problem, " he said at a press conference after chairing the meeting.

Dr Mahathir said the 10 per cent deduction would be from the basic salary of the ministers.

Asked whether senior government officers would be subjected to a salary deduction as well, he said it was up to them.

"This is a habit of mine because when I first became the Prime Minister in 1981, the first thing I did was to cut the salary of not only the ministers but also the senior civil servants who have a higher pay than the ministers.

"It is up to them (senior civil servants). If they feel they want to contribute towards reducing the cost of running this country, they can do so. We are not forcing them," he said.

Dr Mahathir was the fourth prime minister of Malaysia, from 1981 to 2003.

Asked about an additional salary increment for civil servants promised by the previous government, Dr Mahathir said: We are not bound to their promises. This promise was made by opposition now. They have not won the election.

Nevertheless, we will look at it in a very positive way, whether they deserve to be given some extra allowance or whatever, we will do so.

The Barisan Nasional government led by former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak had promised one salary increment for civil servants, to be paid on July 1, 2018.

Dr Mahathir said that in a move to reduce the number of civil servants so as to cut government spending, the government would cease the recruitment of political appointees and re-engage those in critical posts and with low salaries.

He said it was unnecessary to have political appointees as they were appointed merely to accommodate the supporters of the previous government.

He said about 17,000 contract officers were political appointees and some among them had become permanent staff.

Those with low income, we will engage them but first we will terminate (their service), he said, giving an assurance that those with low income would not be victimised.

Replying to a question, Dr Mahathir said the appointment of Datuk Seri Mohd Shukri Abdull as the chief commissioner of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) was most appropriate .

"We have appointed Shukri because he has the experience and he was also involved in the investigation into 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB). His service was terminated because the government at that time did not like what he was doing."

"We know this, that's why we feel that he is the most suitable person to head the MACC," he said.

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