

**SALARY, WAGES OF CIVIL SERVANTS TO BE REVIEWED WHEN COUNTRY'S
COFFERS IMPROVE – PM ANWAR
DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM
NEWS
28 FEBRUARY 2023**

KOTA KINABALU, Feb 28 (Bernama) — The salaries and wages of civil servants will be discussed again when the country's coffers improve and the nation's fiscal deficit can be reduced, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said that although he was personally not satisfied with the salary and wages of public servants compared to their duties and commitments, the rate of increment needed to be assessed based on the country's financial capabilities at present.

“If our coffers improve, the deficit reduced then we can (increase salary and wages), and now when I look at civil servants doing good work in the states, and the revenue increases, the process (of raising salary and wages) can be expedited.

“Just that for today I think it's difficult, we will discuss it first,” he told a media conference after delivering the mandate to state and federal civil servants at the Sabah International Convention Centre, here, today.

Also present were Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor, Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Sabah, Sarawak Affairs and Special Functions) Datuk Armizan Mohd Ali.

Meanwhile, speaking at the ceremony to deliver the mandate, Anwar said the country was facing a fiscal deficit of 5.6 per cent and a total debt of about RM1.5 trillion, which needed to be given priority in order to ensure the country's prosperity, especially from an economic point of view.

"These few months, when our return of two billion, three billion, eight billion (ringgit) entered the country's coffers, not even one sen leaked, if it leaks you all know the things I will do.

"If the country's coffers are sufficient, civil servants can trust me that I will give priority to your fate... because your service and dedication deserve better salaries and wages," he said.

As such, he called on all civil servants to practice integrity and good governance to ensure the country can be managed perfectly, in addition to reviving the country's finances immediately.

"All of you do your work well because there is so much more that we have not resolved, for example, the issue of poverty, the Pan Borneo Highway... we will solve it for our people immediately," he said.

Asked about the call to return Labuan back to Sabah at the press conference, Anwar said what's most important now was for the Federal Government to work together with the Sabah government to revive the territory as a strong financial centre.

"It is not an issue (returning Labuan back to Sabah). The main issue is we see some sluggish development in Labuan, so we must take measures to try and revive Labuan," he said.

Asked about the proposal to build a bridge between Sabah and Labuan, Anwar said it must be looked into from an economic point of view and, for now, the Federal (government's) stand is "to spend on what we are able to".

On Jan 26, Labuan Member of Parliament Datuk Dr Suhaili Abd Rahman claimed that the Federal government was not serious about developing Labuan and that the call for the territory to be returned to Sabah was not out of place considering that the island's economy had weakened greatly since becoming a Federal Territory about 38 years ago.

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Source: <https://www.pmo.gov.my/2023/02/salary-wages-of-civil-servants-to-be-reviewed-when-countrys-coffers-improve-pm-anwar/>