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Option for govt staff

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Civil servants can go back to pension scheme, says Pak Lah

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PUTRAJAYA: Some 40,000 civil servants, who had opted for the Employees Provident Fund, can now revert to the pension scheme.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said these civil servants can exercise their option to revert to the pension scheme in January.

"Their decision will take effect from Feb 1, and they will be able to enjoy all the facilities currently entitled to pensioners, such as free medical treatment. Parents of civil servants, who have passed away and were single at that time, will also receive ex-gratia payments.

"These are some of the decisions that were made following a recent meeting by the Cabinet committee on appointments and salaries for civil servants," he said in his speech before presenting the Public Sector Quality Awards at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre here yesterday.

Other decisions taken by the committee included upgrading the salary schemes for investigating officers under the Anti-Corruption Agency and for senior, low-ranking officers and constables in the police force, and a 20% increase in pay for maritime officers.

"All these decisions will be effective from Jan 1," he said, adding that the Government would work out the actual amount of financial allocation involved in the upgrading and salary increase later.

Cuepacs welcomed the move to allow civil servants on the EPF scheme to opt for the pension scheme, said its secretary-general Ahmad Shah



Well done: Abdullah talking to UiTM Vice-Chancellor Datuk Seri Ibrahim Abu Shah after the award presentation in Putrajaya yesterday. Looking on is Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Sidek Hassan.

Mohamad Zain.

Last week, Cuepacs president Omar Osman complained that civil servants who opted for EPF scheme did not enjoy benefits such as free medical treatment in government hospitals and gratuity payments upon their retirement.

Earlier, Abdullah said he was glad to note from his dialogues with various business and non-governmental groups that the number of complaints involving public delivery of services had gone down.

"In the World Competitiveness Yearbook report for this year, Malaysia

has managed to improve its ranking from 23rd last year to 19th this year. For the category of countries with more than 20 million population, we have also moved one place from 8th to 7th this year.

"Efforts to enhance our online access for government services have begun to bear fruit. In an analysis by Brown University, Malaysia's online government services have improved from 25th place last year to 11th place," he said.

However, Abdullah said award-winning government departments should ensure that they continue to maintain

and improve on their standards.

"Selection of winners must be made according to high standards so that their win will not be disputed by anybody, which can then erode public confidence in our awards," he said.

Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) won the Prime Minister's Award for Quality at the event.

The five winners for the Public Service Innovation Award were the Dental Specialist Clinic in Kuching, Perak Irrigation and Drainage Department, Department of Survey and Mapping, Seremban Municipal Council and Mampu.