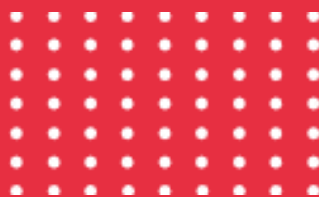


KEMENTERIAN SUMBER MANUSIA

“

KERATAN AKHBAR KESUMA”

AHAD
20 OKTOBER 2024



Gaji: Kenaikan bebaskan industri hotel

MELAKA: Pemain industri perhotelan di negeri ini menyifatkan Belanjawan 2025 yang dibentangkan Menteri Kewangan, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim kelmarin bakal menekan para pengusaha terutama membabitkan peningkatan kos operasi.

Pengerusi Persatuan Hotel Malaysia (MAH) Melaka Chapter, Khairulnizam Kasim berkata, kenaikan kadar gaji minimum daripada RM1,500 kepada RM1,700 sebulan yang berkuat kuasa mulai 1 Februari 2025 tanpa sebarang pengecualian cukai baharu amat membebaskan.

Jelasnya, meskipun Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan (PKP)



telah berakhir, namun prestasi kewangan majoriti pengusaha belum stabil seperti sebelum pandemik Covid-19.

“Saya membawa suara pengusaha hotel kerana kami tidak melihat sebarang insentif atau pengecualian cukai untuk membantu kami mengatasi kelembapan perniagaan ketika ini.

“Pengumuman gaji minimum sektor swasta yang dinantikan kepada RM1,700 hanya

menambah beban kewangan hotel,” katanya ketika dihubungi *Mingguan Malaysia*.

Anwar mengumumkan, kerajaan bersetuju menaikkan kadar gaji minimum daripada RM1,500 sebulan kepada RM1,700 sebulan yang berkuat kuasa mulai 1 Februari 2025.

Kerajaan juga memutuskan penangguhan kuat kuasa gaji minimum RM1,700 membabitkan majikan yang mempunyai kurang daripada lima pekerja bagi tempoh enam bulan iaitu berkuat kuasa pada 1 Ogos 2025.

Tambah Khairulnizam, peruntukan RM550 juta untuk mempergiat promosi dan aktiv-

iti pelancongan sebagai persiapan rapi menjelang Tahun Melawat Malaysia 2026 juga tidak membawa sebarang makna kepada industri berkenaan.

Ujarnya, sepatutnya pelepasan cukai pendapatan sebanyak 70 peratus selama lima tahun yang sedang dinikmati pengusaha hotel tiga bintang ke bawah, perlu diperluaskan kepada hotel bertaraf empat dan lima bintang.

“Belanjawan 2025 ini menunjukkan kami seolah-olah diabaikan, walaupun kami telah menyuarakan perkara berkaitan dalam setiap kali pertemuan dengan Kementerian sejak beberapa tahun lalu,” jelasnya.

Majikan usah ambil kesempatan kenaikan gaji minimum RM1,700

Bayaran upah perlu setimpal kelayakan taraf pendidikan, kemahiran pekerja

Oleh Essa Abu Yamin
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Kuala Lumpur: Semua majikan termasuk sektor perladangan dan komoditi diingatkan supaya tidak mengambil kesempatan terhadap kenaikan gaji minimum daripada RM1,500 kepada RM1,700 yang akan dilaksanakan Februari tahun hadapan.

Menteri Perladangan dan Komoditi, Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani, berkata gaji minimum berkenaan bagaimanapun perlu diberikan setimpal dengan kelayakan taraf pendidikan dan kemahiran pekerja berkenaan.

"Jadi isu itu tidak berbangkit, cuma kita mahu tekankan bahawa syarikat jangan mengambil kesempatan dengan gaji minimum berkenaan.

"RM1,700 adalah gaji minimum tetapi kebanyakan daripada pekerja ini mereka sememangnya sudah mempunyai gaji melebihi daripada paras gaji berkenaan,"



Johari pada Majlis Program Sumbangan Lesen Memandu B2 Parlimen Titiwangsa, di Dewan Serbaguna PPR Ampang Hilir, semalam.

(Foto Mohamad Shahrl Badri Saall/BH)



katanya selepas merasmikan Majlis Program Sumbangan Lesen Memandu B2 Parlimen Titiwangsa, di Dewan Serbaguna PPR Ampang Hilir, di sini semalam.

Johari berkata, sebagai contoh dalam sektor perladangan sudah

ramai pekerja tempatan menda-pat gaji lebih daripada gaji minimum yang ditetapkan.

Perlu kerjasama majikan

"Majikan mendapat pengecualian bahawa untuk enam bulan pertama syarikat yang menggajikan lima orang ke bawah, mereka diberi masa untuk menyesuaikan gaji minimum.

"Bagaimana kita perlu terima hakikat bahawa kos sara hidup ketika ini semakin meningkat.

Ada perkara kerajaan boleh tampung dan ada perkara yang kerajaan memerlukan kerjasama daripada majikan," katanya.

Kelmarin, Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, ketika mengumumkan Belanjawan 2025, berkata kerajaan bersetuju menaikkan kadar gaji minimum kepada RM1,700 sebulan daripada RM1,500 kini berkuat kuasa 1 Februari tahun depan.

Anwar berkata, kerajaan juga

memutuskan penangguhan kuat kuasa gaji minimum RM1,700 membabitkan majikan yang mempunyai kurang lima pekerja bagi tempoh enam bulan iaitu berkuat kuasa pada 1 Ogos 2025.

"Kerajaan MADANI sentiasa menitikberatkan soal pendapatan rakyat. Penstrukturan ekonomi hanya dianggap berjaya apabila rakyat meraih gaji dan upah yang bermakna untuk menjalani hidup dengan lebih selesa," katanya.



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Need to move faster towards higher wages

THE usual laudatory statements from captains of industry, key opinion leaders and subject matter experts following the tabling of the federal budget are an annual exercise in which the noise often drowns out what is relevant to the vast majority of citizens – we just want to know what's in it for us, especially when the economy seems to be chugging along decently and the lingering impact from the Covid-19 lockdowns seems to have mostly dissipated.

Against the backdrop of a higher cost of living, higher wage scales are the best antidote for the

pain of ordinary workers who have to deal with inflation eating into their take-home pay.

And yes, this includes the T15 (top 15%) income bracket group with household incomes averaging RM12,000 monthly – even the lower reaches of the T15 income bracket have been affected, albeit not as badly as those in lower brackets, perhaps.

A hike in the minimum wage is always welcome, but the rise to RM1,700 from RM1,500 announced is not bold enough.

A figure of RM2,000 was bandied about before the tabling of the budget, but sadly this did not

materialise.

Local media, including *The Star*, has reported on the gap between wages and the cost-of-living issue numerous times.

Can the government raise the wage share of national income (that is, the amount of GDP paid out in wages, salaries and benefits) to 45% by 2035 from 32.4% in 2022?

It seems very gradual and has been beset by intense pushback from businesses.

While understanding that a gradual approach is less risky and that economic growth as well as productivity and market forces

should play a role in determining wages, Malaysia's wage share of national income as an upper-middle-income country should be higher as it aspires to join the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) club of rich nations, where the average labour share of national income is well over 40%.

It is no wonder that many still prefer to work abroad in countries where wages are higher and where the currency is stronger.

Never mind the minimum wage; we need to know if there are steps being taken to move toward a living wage.

Through the Madani economy framework, the main platform for this could be the Progressive Wage Policy (PWP).

But this seems to have gotten off to a rocky start, although it is encouraging that the initiative to reskill or upskill workers to enable them to earn higher wages will be fully implemented next year.

Perhaps the PWP could do with a much higher allocation than the RM200mil allocated on Friday to benefit 50,000 workers.

To have momentum, much larger allocations benefiting many more workers are needed.

Minimum wage hike a balancing act

Despite groups lauding the move, eateries share cost concerns

By CHARLES RAMENDRAN and ARFA YUNUS
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PETALING JAYA: The RM1,700 minimum wage from next year has led to divergent views, with eateries cautioning about price increases, but consumer groups are happy that low-wage earners will get better pay.

Malaysian Indian Restaurant Owners Association president Datuk J. Govindasamy said the new minimum wage would lead to prices going up between 20% and 30%.

He said a rise in operating costs had been evident during past revisions of the minimum wage.

"Operating costs are already on the rise with the removal of the diesel subsidy and the price increase of raw materials. Little is being done to control the price rise of raw materials, but the authorities are often quick to scrutinise the prices of end products.

"While the government is giving out perks to the people in some ways, it appears to be taking

it back by imposing such policies," he said.

Budget 2025, which was tabled on Friday, stated that Malaysia's minimum wage would go up from RM1,500 to RM1,700 effective Feb 1 next year.

When contacted, Govindasamy urged the government to regulate the price of raw materials so that restaurant operators could keep their prices affordable.

He also said the proposal to have foreign workers contribute to the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) would further compound the situation.

He questioned the need for these foreigners to have such savings, given that most of them build their nest egg by sending their wages to their families in their homeland.

"Employers will need to contribute another 12% to a foreign worker's EPF," he said.

Restaurant and Bistro Owners Association vice-president Jeremy Lim lamented about ways to keep prices down when costs were rising.

"This will surely impact the con-



Offsetting costs: The government has been urged to regulate the price of raw materials so that restaurant operators could keep their prices affordable with the upcoming minimum wage hike.

sumer. Policymakers should consult the industry players to get a true picture on the ground prior to making such proposals," he said.

"It is a difficult period for operators as the industry has not recovered to its pre-pandemic days."

Malaysian Muslim Restaurant Owners Association (Presma) president Datuk Jawahar Ali Taib Khan spoke of the delicate balance for businesses to maintain profitability without burdening customers with higher prices.

"Labour costs typically make up a significant portion of expenses. Raising minimum wages and levies on foreign workers will directly impact businesses, particularly those in labour-intensive sectors like the food and beverage industry.

"With higher operational costs, operators may have no choice but to pass these additional costs to consumers," he said.

With tight profit margins, he said restaurant operators might need to raise prices if they are unable to absorb the increase in costs through other cost-cutting measures.

"This will start from the manufacturer to the wholesaler and eventually the retailers," he said.

However, consumer groups commended the government on the new minimum wage, calling it long overdue for workers, especially those in cities and urban areas.

Federation of Malaysian Consumers Association (Fomca) president Datuk N. Marimuthu said the raise would help workers cope with inflation and the cost of living.

"In fact, I am disappointed that the minimum wage has only increased to RM1,700. It should be RM2,000 instead, especially for those working in big cities.

"Higher wages will increase productivity and help lower corruption. We should not compromise on wages," he said.

To address the rising costs, Marimuthu said the government should increase allocations under its cost of living initiatives for lower income groups, such as the Payung Rahmah Madani, to at least RM1.5bil.

"With 30 million Malaysians out

there, RM300mil under the Payung Rahmah initiative is insufficient, as such aid is needed by a large fraction of them," he said.

Consumers Association of Penang president Mohideen Abdul Kader echoed similar support for the wage increase, saying that people should learn to cope with any rise in the cost of living from the wage revision.

"It is a good move, and I believe the government will revise this by increasing wages from time to time in the future. The living wage for a single person at the very minimum should be RM2,000 to meet their very basic needs and to live comfortably.

"Otherwise, they will fall below the poverty line. Food prices will rise, but CAP has been advocating people reduce their expenditure by preparing their own food or eating at home. We have become too dependent on outside food and delivery services.

"This lifestyle must change with some creative ways and adjustments. Eating out occasionally is acceptable, but it is unhealthy if it's done daily," he said.



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Wage hike sparks cost of living concerns

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia's move to raise the minimum wage by RM200 to RM1,700 does not account for the disparity in cost of living across different states, says an economist.

While the RM1,700 wage may be manageable in the Klang Valley, it could strain businesses in regions where the cost of living is lower, said Dr Carmelo Ferlito, CEO of the Centre for Market Education.

This could potentially distort local economies, he said.

During the tabling of Budget 2025 on Friday, Prime Minister

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the minimum wage would go up from RM1,500 to RM1,700 effective Feb 1 next year.

Ferlito, when contacted, cautioned that the new minimum wage would not catapult the country to high-income status.

In fact, it could have the opposite effect, he said.

He said that enforcing wage hikes ignores the realities of market dynamics and sustainable growth.

Moreover, Ferlito said it could lead to job losses, particularly for low-skilled workers.

He said businesses may be driven to replace employees with automation to offset the rising costs.

"The workers may eventually get retrenched and replaced with machines," he said.

As for young Malaysians, a number of them voiced their concerns about the rising cost of living.

Firdaws Azam, 20, a university student, said he was unsure about the wage hike, explaining that while it seemed like a beneficial thing, it could also lead to higher living costs.

"While the additional RM200 means extra money in the pocket, I wonder if that will be enough because surely the cost of living will go up too, right?" he asked.

He voiced concerns about the challenges he might face in the future if he started his own business.

"I feel that I would struggle a lot since the cost (of operations) will increase, which means I have to impose that (additional) cost on my buyers."

Sportsman Efrain Feerzan, 19, feels that the increase is a positive step, but he is uncertain about its

broader impact.

"I have done some travelling in the last few years, and I noticed that high-income countries provide higher wages to their people, so I do see this increase as a positive effort," he said.

However, Efrain expressed concerns about whether the higher wages could lead to increased costs for everyday necessities.

"In Australia, for example, they have a higher minimum wage, but the amount of money we pay just for a meal at a restaurant is shocking, which must mean their cost of living is high," he said.



Plantation and Commodities Minister Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani (centre) attending a programme to help some 200 youths obtain their B2 motorcycle licences in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. NSTP PIC BY MOHAMAD SHAHRIL BADRI SAALI

MINIMUM WAGE

Graduates deserve higher salary, says Johari

KUALA LUMPUR: Employers should pay graduates salaries that commensurate with their qualifications and not just based on the minimum wage, says Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani.

On the increased RM1,700 minimum wage and its impact, Johari, the plantation and commodities minister, said he did not foresee a major issue.

“Most workers in various sectors already earn more than RM1,700,” he said after a community event in Titiwangsa here.

“Even in the plantation sector, most of our local workers earn more than RM1,700.”

He said companies should not take advantage of workers and pay degree holders the minimum wage.

“Give them more, they have a degree.”

On Friday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim announced

that the minimum wage would be raised from RM1,500 to RM1,700 a month from Feb 1. Employers with fewer than five workers have until Aug 1 to comply.

“We have to accept the reality that living costs have increased and there are things the government can take care of,” said Johari. “However, we also ask employers to cooperate. We know it can be tough but we have to adjust.”

Johari said if wages were not raised, it could lead to bigger problems, including a shortage of local workers who would not want to work because of low salaries.

“Many big and medium-sized companies are already paying above RM1,700, so there is no problem.”

Earlier, Johari, the Titiwangsa member of parliament, launched a programme to help some 200 youths in the constituency obtain their B2 motorcycle licences.