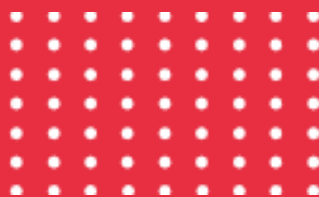


KEMENTERIAN SUMBER MANUSIA

“

# KERATAN AKHBAR KESUMA”

SABTU  
21 SEPTEMBER 2024



# Pekerja swasta harap gaji minimum ditingkatkan

Isi rumah berbelanja besar terutamanya di kawasan bandar

Oleh **IZWAN ROZLIN**  
**KUALA LUMPUR**

**P**ekerja sektor swasta di negara ini mengharapkan pelaksanaan gaji minimum yang diperkukuhkan dengan dasar gaji progresif pekerja swasta dapat dilaksanakan selepas pengumuman pelarasan gaji kakitangan awam, baru-baru ini.

Rata-rata mereka berharap isu kenaikan tangga gaji pekerja swasta perlu ditangani dahulu manakala majikan untuk cakna memberikan imbuhan setimpal dengan prestasi dilakukan pekerja mereka.

Pekerja swasta, Mohd Amirul Safwan, 43, berkata, gaji minimum RM1,500 sudah tidak relevan memandangkan kos sara hidup yang begitu tinggi ketika ini.

Menurutnya, gaji minimum swasta dicadangkan sepatutnya diadakan dua tahun sekali selepas kajian terakhir dijalankan pada tahun 2022.

"Peningkatan gaji pernah berlaku ketika kerajaan meminta gaji minimum dalam sektor kerajaan ditingkatkan kepada RM1,500 dan ada majikan sektor swasta turut melaksanakannya.

"Namun dalam sektor swasta, isu gaji minimum hendaklah dikaji setiap dua tahun dalam Majlis Perundingan Gaji Negara," katanya kepada *Sinar Harian*.

Bagi Khairul Azwan Azman, 36, pula selain kos sara hidup yang tinggi, pekerja swasta yang mempunyai gaji kurang RM4,000 bagi setiap isi rumah perlu berbelanja besar membayar angsuran bulanan rumah setiap bulan.

"Kalau suami dan isteri bekerja mungkin tidak ada masalah, tetapi bagaimana jika hanya seorang bekerja ditambah dengan perbelanjaan harian pasti membebankan," katanya yang tinggal di Kota Kemuning.

Tambahnya, jika gaji minimum pekerja swasta dapat dinaikkan, ia secara tidak langsung dapat meningkatkan produktiviti syarikat tersebut.

"Kerajaan perlu melakukan sesuatu seiring dengan tangga gaji kakitangan awam yang sudah dinaikkan, sekarang Kementerian Sumber Manusia (Kesuma) bantulah kami di sektor swasta pula," katanya.



Cadangan peningkatan gaji minimum dalam kalangan pekerja swasta sangat relevan kerana kos sara hidup semakin meningkat.



Gaji minimum untuk pekerja swasta perlu ditingkatkan sehingga RM2,200 berdasarkan keadaan semasa dan kos yang meningkat."

- Aulia Murty

## Keperitan

Menurut Mohd Aulia Murty, 35, sudah sampai masanya kerajaan menguatkuasakan gaji minimum yang tinggi bagi membantu pekerja sektor swasta khususnya yang tinggal di bandar besar.

"Gaji minimum untuk pekerja swasta perlu ditingkatkan sehingga RM2,200 berdasarkan keadaan semasa dan kos yang meningkat," katanya yang mempunyai dua orang anak.

Mohd Aulia berkata, setiap hari perbelanjaan petrol, tol perlu dikeluarkan, jika gaji minimum ini kekal dan syarikat hanya memberi alasan tidak ada untung maka nasib pekerja swasta agak sukar.

"Saya ada anak bersekolah, hujung tahun saya perlu menyediakan perbelanjaan kelengkapan sekolah, buku dan sebagainya. Kalau kerajaan tidak bantu memang masalah besar untuk kami pekerja swasta," katanya.

Sementara itu, pesara, Anthony Soosai, 63, berkata, keperitan pekerja sektor swasta turut dirasai oleh dirinya sebagai seorang bapa.

"Kalau ada usaha untuk menaikkan gaji

minimum khususnya untuk sektor swasta saya memang sokong sebab tidak semua pekerja swasta ini hidupnya senang.

"Kalau anda ada anak-anak yang bekerja dalam sektor swasta, sebagai ibu bapa mesti tahu betapa susahnyanya mereka untuk membina keluarga khususnya yang tinggal di bandar besar," katanya.

## Naikkan gaji pekerja swasta

Sementara itu Melissa, 42, berkata, sebagai majikan dan juga pekerja, beliau amat menyokong sebarang usaha untuk menaikkan gaji minimum pekerja swasta.

"Pada masa sama syarikat swasta juga perlu dibantu oleh kerajaan bagi membolehkan golongan pekerja mendapat gaji yang tinggi.

"RM1,500 adalah gaji yang kecil bukan untuk orang berkeluarga sahaja tetapi orang bujang juga memang tidak cukup.

"Sebab itu pekerja lepasan universiti perlu memperolehi tangga gaji sekitar RM2,000 atau lebih," katanya.

Tambahnya, kalau gaji kakitangan kerajaan boleh naik, mengapa tidak kerajaan usahakan kenaikan gaji pekerja swasta.

Pekerja swasta, Mohd Amin Jelani, 36, berkata, majikan sektor swasta berperanan memastikan setiap pekerja mereka mendapat pampasan sewajarnya berdasarkan prestasi dan produktiviti mereka.

"Majikan akan memberikan kenaikan gaji pekerja swasta sekiranya meningkatkan kemahiran mereka untuk lebih produktif.

"Apabila pekerja semakin produktif, syarikat akan menjana pendapatan dan keuntungan lebih tinggi sekali gus membolehkan majikan memberi kenaikan gaji kepada pekerja mereka," katanya.

Tambahnya, kerajaan juga diharap dapat membantu syarikat swasta meningkatkan hasil perolehan dan keuntungan masing-masing sekali gus dapat menjamin pendapatan tinggi kepada kakitangan swasta.



MOHD AMIRUL



KHAIRUL AZWAN



MOHD AULIA



MELISSA



MOHD AMIN



ANTHONY



Kenaikan gaji diberikan kepada pekerja swasta untuk menjadikan mereka lebih produktif.

By FINTAN NG  
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THE next employee wage statistics for the formal sector will be published on Oct 25, a week after the tabling of Budget 2025. The statistics provides a view of the generally low wages of the Malaysian workforce and gives a better understanding tied to cost-of-living issues.

The government has indicated that cost-of-living issues will be the main focus of the upcoming budget as it strives to implement reforms to support economic growth through high-value industries that offer higher wages, while cutting or rationalising subsidies that many in Malaysia have grown accustomed to over the decades. There were 6.54 million employees in the formal sector in the first quarter of 2024.

In a pre-budget statement, the government laid out three short-term priorities for the budget under "Raise the Ceiling", "Raise the Floor" and "Good Governance and Public Sector Reform", which comes under the Madani Economy framework. Under the "Raise the Floor" thrust, the government promises "to improve the quality of life for all Malaysians to ensure equitable benefits and opportunities, a decent standard of living and social protection for the rakyat".

This will involve a comprehensive set of measures and targeted policies to uplift disadvantaged communities, improve access to essential services such as education and healthcare as well as create sustainable income opportunities.

### Tackling low wages

From the latest available Statistics Department data on employee wages for the formal sector, median wage growth for the first quarter seems pretty encouraging at first glance, rising by 9.4% to RM2,844 in March, after wage gains of 8.5% and 5.2% in February and January to RM2,782 and RM2,945 respectively.

The median wage in this respect refers to half of Malaysians in formal sector employment earning above the wage range indicated and the other half drawing below the indicated range.

Despite the pace of wage rises among formal sector employees, the reality is that inflation has outpaced wage growth. According to the employee wages statistics, nearly a third of formal employees earned below RM2,000 in March 2024 while employees aged 45 to 49 years had the highest median monthly wages, recording RM3,818 in March 2024. Kuala Lumpur and Selangor recorded higher than the March national median monthly wage of RM2,844 at RM4,256 and RM3,164 respectively.

There are no comparison for overall median wages outside of the formal sector. The next report on the informal sector would only be released on Nov 28, while the last update on the sector came out

# Upping wages via upskilling

## Graduates statistics 2022

### Employed graduates mean & median monthly salaries & wages

		Mean (RM)	Median (RM)
Total	2022	4,760	4,128
	2021	4,582	3,911
Male	2022	5,137	4,239
	2021	4,973	4,034
Female	2022	4,374	3,848
	2021	4,215	3,680

### Graduates salaries & wages by skill

		Mean (RM)	Median (RM)
Skilled	2022	5,763	5,193
	2021	5,465	4,812
Semi-skilled	2022	2,695	2,159
	2021	2,488	2,049
Low-skilled	2022	2,202	1,817
	2021	2,017	1,698

### Graduates salaries & wages by location

		Mean (RM)	Median (RM)
Urban	2022	4,783	4,129
	2021	4,672	3,959
Rural	2022	3,844	3,269
	2021	3,776	3,114

Source: Statistics Department

TheStar graphics

in July 2020 reporting on 2019 statistics.

According to this last update, there were 1.26 million people working in the informal sector in 2019, which was a decline from 2017. In 2015, a tenth of all workers in the country were classified as informal workers, where wage data is much more difficult to capture.

The formal sector wage growth is taking place against a backdrop of rising economic activities that has contributed to the 5.0% gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the first-half of this year against 4.1% growth in the same period of 2023.

There is optimism that economic growth this year could at least rise to the upper range of the government's 4% to 5% GDP forecast. Similarly, wages are growing against the slower rise in both headline and core inflation, although there are expectations of inflation picking up in the second-half of 2024 on more subsidy cuts or rationalisation.

The government forecast for headline inflation this year is in the range of 2.0% to 3.5% and for core inflation (excluding fresh food and government-administered goods) to be in the range of 2.0% to 3.0%. The subsidy on diesel was removed on

June 1 and against all expectations, headline and core inflation has remained steady for June and July compared with May.

On a granular level, transportation costs did rise in June compared with May as did prices of fresh seafood and vegetables but July fresh food prices were lower.

When compared with Belanjawanku 2022/2023, a reference budget for a socially acceptable living standard, singles in the Klang Valley, whether car owners or users of public transport, can scrape by as the estimated monthly expenses were RM1,700 and RM2,600 respectively.

Compare this with a widely cited report, "The Living Wage: Beyond Making Ends Meet", which was published by Bank Negara in March 2018 showing the provisional living estimates in Kuala Lumpur for 2016 ranging from RM2,700 for a single adult to RM4,500 for a couple without children and RM6,500 for a couple with two children.

Notably, there are no homeowners in all three household scenarios.

The findings from Belanjawanku 2022/2023 indicated that household expenses

■ Cost-of-living issues will be the main focus of the upcoming budget

■ Despite the pace of wage rises among formal sector employees, inflation has outpaced wage growth

■ The budget is expected to enhance the Progressive Wage Policy or PWP scheme to encourage sustainable wage enhancement and skill improvement



mostly went to basic needs such as food, housing and transport, with the estimated expenses for all household categories having increased between 2019 and 2022. The increase is most visible in food and housing, where there is a rising trend cutting across all household categories in the Klang Valley.

The Bank Negara report remains relevant today, as the report's authors noted that "these findings underscore the importance of creating a high-skilled workforce in Malaysia that is equipped with the necessary competencies for higher-paying jobs". Findings showed that those earning below the living wage were mostly secondary school-leavers with low to mid-skilled jobs, while those earning above the living wage were mostly tertiary graduates with high-skilled jobs.

In answer to these findings, the Progressive Wage Policy (PWP) was rolled out, with the pilot programme launched recently for employees earning

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<b>Ruang</b>	<b>Cover Feature</b>
<b>Muka Surat</b>	<b>4 &amp; 5</b>



4%  
to 5%

There is optimism that economic growth this year may at least rise to the upper range of the government's forecast.

6.54  
million

The number of employees in the formal sector in the first quarter of 2024.

wages of between RM1,500 and RM4,999. The PWP aims to boost employee income through upgrading skills and raising productivity levels, which the government is encouraging businesses to implement through a co-funding incentive structure over a period of 12 months for employees to help with the

wage increases. Lee Heng Gue, executive director at the Socio-Economic Research Centre, says the pilot programme is not up to expectations as only 144 companies covering 1,038 employees have met the eligibility to get the co-sharing wage incentive. Nearly 1,100 companies are voluntarily partic-

ipating in the PWP. "The budget is expected to enhance the PWP scheme to encourage sustainable wage enhancement and skill improvement," he says, adding that there would also be a focus on technical and vocational skills development in collaborations with government-linked compa-

nies, industry groups as well as education institutions.

"The focus on upskilling and reskilling investments not only create a broad-base innovation and startup culture, but also produce a tech-savvy workforce to support the generative artificial intelligence (AI) system. The budget is expected to allocate fund for investment in AI, tech skills, data quality and public information technology infrastructure," Lee says.

He says it is not surprising that the budget will announce higher minimum wage (currently at RM1,500 per month) and introduce a multi-tiered foreign levy.

"Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) hope that the quantum of increases must not be too steep so as not to burden them. The levy can be applied to SMEs only two years after its initial implementation for large companies," he says.

As a reference, according to the Graduate Statistics 2022, employed graduates earned a median monthly salary of RM4,128 in 2022, with the median growing by 5.5%.

When broken down into skills categories, graduates in skilled occupations saw a 7.9% increase in median monthly salaries and wages for 2022, reaching RM5,913, those in semi-skilled occupations recorded a 5.4% increase in median monthly salaries and wages amounting to RM2,159 and those in low-skilled occupations saw median monthly salaries and wages grew by 7.0% to RM1,817.

Sunway University economics professor Yeah Kim Leng, who is also economic adviser to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, says more collaborative efforts with the private sector will be needed to ensure sustainable wage increases that are in line with improvements in labour productivity.

"Wage and income increases are tied to labour market conditions that in turn are shaped by

skilled labour employment stemming from high value-added business expansion and investment activities," he says.

Yeah noted that sustaining the rise in quality domestic and foreign direct investment (FDI) is crucial to address the cost-of-living issues from the employment and income-side of development.

"On the cost aspect, fostering competitive markets and ensuring adequate production capacities and supplies to meet consumer demand, particularly in essential goods and services, are important objectives that Budget 2025 seeks to achieve to contain cost-of-living pressures," he says, adding that food production is where there are opportunities to expand scale and productivity both to strengthen food security and reduce dependence on imports.

#### 'Raise the Floor'

Acknowledging that benefits from the faster economic growth this year has been concentrated, with the households at the lower-to-middle-income levels being burdened by higher expenses, Lee says Budget 2025 will announce more enhancements to the Sumbangan Asas Rahmah and Sumbangan Tunai Rahmah to help households with cost-of-living concerns while the salary increments for the 1.7 million civil servants will come in handy.

BIMB Securities Research deputy chief economist Zafri Zulkeffeli says, in a report, that direct cash payments to vulnerable groups will continue, with potentially higher payments based on factors such as location and household size. "The fiscal policy also will address education and healthcare issues including preparing for ageing society and upgrading of healthcare facilities. We opine there are incentives for affordable housing and homebuyers especially the new ones," he says.

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