

# Cuepacs wants relook at cost-cutting

**PETALING JAYA:** The country's civil servants union has urged the Government to re-examine the stricter controls on overtime and other measures introduced to optimise public expenditure, saying it could hit lower-ranking staff badly.

Cuepacs president Datuk Azih Muda said many lower ranking public servants depended on their overtime to supplement their basic salaries in order to make ends meet in view of the rising cost of living.

"Some of us work at Urban Transformation Centres until 10pm, and many from Customs, Immigration or those involved in border security also have a lot of overtime.

"If their overtime is cut, they may have to resort to second jobs during their off-duty hours and drive taxis or work as security guards. It will be an extra burden," he said.

Azih also asked the Government to reconsider the reduction in the issuance of uniforms to officers, as well as the abolition of positions that are not filled for more than two years.

"Enforcement officers need more than two sets of uniforms a year. If they wear ragged uniforms, don't you think it will reflect badly on the Government itself?" asked Azih.

Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Chua Tee Yong said the measures were not cast in stone and that the Government would consider feedback from related groups, including public servants.

"The announcement of the measures is just an initial step, and some may need to be adjusted," he said.

Chua said the measures showed the Government's commitment to recalibrate its spending in light of external economic conditions.

Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa said the Government would continue to hire 25,000 people to replace those who retire but there would be no new positions.

He said the Government's policy of maintaining 1.61 million civil servants remain unchanged.

Chairman of the Asli Center for Public Policy Studies Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam said the measures were a good move, signalling that the Government meant business in managing the country's fiscal situation more effectively.