

# Ali: Civil servants should raise productivity

**PUTRAJAYA:** Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa welcomed the decision not to cut the salaries or allowances of civil servants and urged them to work hard.

He said the Prime Minister has dispelled rumours that the Government would introduce pay and allowance cuts.

"He has also assured us that the salary increment on July 1, as pledged last year, will be maintained.

"This is good news. I hope all civil servants will increase their productivity," he said.

Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan said that making it mandatory for houses costing up to RM300,000 to be sold to first-time house buyers only would prevent speculative buying.

It would also give genuine buyers the opportunity to own property, he said.

In addition to that, he welcomed the financial help that would be given to those buying units under the People's Housing Programme.

Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Minister Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainuddin said increasing the number of fair-price shops would provide consumers with more access to goods that were affordable and reasonably priced.

He said there were 1,500 stores keen to be fair-price shops, adding that his ministry would be beefing up enforcement against irresponsible traders.

It would also educate businessmen on

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being to be ethical and honest and practice self-compliance, he added.

MCA Youth chief Senator Chong Sin Woon described the revised Budget as "realistic".

He said priority was given to the needs of the poor people, as seen in the making of meat and vegetables cheaper by 10% to 15%.

The 3% reduction in the Employees Provident Fund contribution by workers would give people more spending power and help stimulate the economy, he said.

Chong, who is Deputy Education Minister, said the revised Budget also continues to give top priority to education, improve the human resources in the country, which was very important.

Describing it as a *rakyat*-centric Budget, Chong hoped that everyone would work together and face the challenges together.