

Pakatan wants PM's Dept bloated expenses slashed
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The government's allocation for the Prime Minister's Department (PMD) had shot up immensely since 2008 - and Pakatan Rakyat aims to reduce the allocation in order to set funds aside for "more pressing national priorities".

The opposition's coalition today demanded that Prime Minister Najib Razak explain the staggering increase in the PMD budget over the last three years.

"In the entire 8th Malaysia Plan period (2001-2005), the development budget for the PMD was RM7.2 billion, or 4.3 percent of the total allocation for the plan period.

"The department's development budget saw a four-fold increase in the 9th Malaysia Plan, driving the allocation up to RM29.6 billion, or 13.5 percent of the total 9th Plan allocation," the DAP's Bukit Bendera MP Liew Chin Tong (above) said today.

Liew described the PMD's budget for 2009 as "abominable" as it was doubled from RM7.1 billion for the year before to RM14 billion.

For 2010, the PMD was allocated RM12.1 billion, slightly lower than the amount for 2009.

A whopping RM15.86 billion for 2011 alone

For 2011, the department was given RM15.86 billion - RM10.78 billion for development and RM5.76 billion for operations.

"The total for 2005 was a mere RM4.1 billion in comparison," Liew said, reading out a statement jointly signed by Pakatan's working committee on the coalition's alternative budget.

"The development allocation for the PMD is discretionary expenditure that allows the prime minister to approve it literally with the stroke of a pen, whereas other ministerial expenditures or Treasury payments must pass through more rigorous checks.

"We say that instead of giving the money into the hands of prime minister, the prime minister should ensure that all departments get an adequate amount of expenditure and spend it wisely," he said.

Echoing the call for greater transparency and accountability on the part of the government, Liew said: "The rakyat deserve to know exactly on what and where the PMD has been spending so much money."

Unlike the current government's "bloated spending", he added, Pakatan in its alternative budget aimed to slash the allocation for the PMD to about RM5 billion.