

PM's allowance cuts 'do nothing' to stop wastage

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's recent move to cut entertainment allowances for all ministers and deputy ministers in his cabinet by 10 percent "does not help at all" in curbing wastage and leakages in the government, PKR director of strategy Rafizi Ramli said today.

"Even though the deduction of entertainment allowance is a signal that his administration is aware of people's anger towards the recent price hikes, it does not help at all in stopping wastage," Rafizi said in a statement today.

He pointed out that Najib himself will only have RM1,698 deducted from his monthly allowance of RM16,979, while the Prime Minister's Department has about RM6.8 billion in mystery funds - which DAP has previously labelled as "near slush funds".

"Not a single cent from this allocation (RM6.8 billion) was cut even though it is these expenditures that cause the people's money to be wasted," he said.

Including all ministers and deputy ministers in the cabinet, the 10 percent deduction merely comes up to RM50,353 a month or RM604,238 a year.

Putting the blame on civil servants?

Rafizi also said that Najib's cost-cutting measures announced yesterday seem to put the blame on civil servants for his own failing to take care of the finances of the country.

"It is as though civil servants are the main reason for the wastages under his administration," Rafizi said.

"The main reason for financial woes in the country is the leadership which is not serious in combating corruption, even being mired in corruption," Rafizi added further.

Rafizi said that Najib's move was no different than his predecessor Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's move in 2008, who also announced a 10 percent deduction in entertainment allowance for ministers.

"That move did not at all stop wastages in the BN government back then," he pointed out.

Rafizi said that if Najib is serious about cutting costs, and wants to overcome the "crisis" surrounding the cost of living, he should halt the proposed toll hikes, and also reduce excise duty for cars by at least 30 percent.

He also urged that public and private sector cooperation projects be frozen as more money needs to be dished out for concessionaires, while urging the government to stop allocating funds for programmes and initiatives with scant details such as the National Blue Ocean Strategy (NBOS), which has been allocated RM278 million in the last budget.

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