PM reminds civil service to be thrifty

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Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim today reminded all civil servants to be thrifty and count every sen when spending public funds.

This includes being prudent in using electricity and stationery, he said, during a monthly staff gathering at the Prime Minister's Office this morning.

"When it comes to wastage, we usually look at the major kind of profligate spending.

"But we always forget the way we use electricity in the office, behaving like our father is footing the bill.

"Or the way we use (office) pens. A department head would have at least five pens, a secretary-general uses 10, the KSN (chief secretary to the government) 12, minister 15, and prime minister 20. Well maybe not 20, I think around 18," Anwar said in jest.

In his speech, the prime minister told civil servants they must improve the way they use government supplies as they are paid for with taxpayers' money.

The money saved, he added, can be channelled for better purposes.

He also asked for the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (Jakim) to assist with instilling a culture of being prudent among Muslim civil servants.

"I told the KSN earlier that during my first time as the finance minister (1991-1998), the monthly gathering would be held outside the ministry's building where we would be able to see which office still had its lights on.

"When this happened, I would ask the respective department heads to go and switch off the lights first. We are going to be out here for one hour, so why must the lights be on?

"It is not your money, it is public funds," he said.

Civil service bonuses

Meanwhile, on the civil service bonuses mooted by the government under Budget 2024, Anwar said it was a token of appreciation pending a comprehensive review of their current salary schemes.

According to the prime minister, it was unrealistic for the government to expect high performance and productivity from civil servants without increasing their pay to be commensurate with the work.

“And I hope this signal by the government to appreciate its civil servants would also be followed by the private sector,” he said.

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