

Reduce spending, PM tells civil servants

NST - 7/3/2006

■ By Hamidah Atan
news@nst.com.my

PUTRAJAYA, Mon. — Be prudent in spending and don't waste government funds.

This is Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's request of civil servants at a time of rising costs.

The Prime Minister suggested simple ways of reducing government expenditure, such as conserving energy by turning off unnecessary lights and only using air-conditioning where and when required.

Speaking to civil servants of the Prime Minister's Department at their monthly gathering here today, Abdullah reminded them of their role in ensuring that wastage of public funds was kept to a minimum.

"In terms of spending, the Government needs to be prudent.

"We have to be thrifty and not overspend. I have said this before and circulars have also been issued."

Abdullah acknowledged there were signs that government departments and agencies had successfully reduced expenditure.

"I hope this will continue. There should not be any more wastage."

Abdullah also reminded civil servants not to delay the approval of projects. "Delay increases cost. We have to pay a high price for delays. So there must not be any delay. Everything should be expedited."

The Prime Minister noted that Islam encouraged prudence in every aspect of life.

Abdullah also touched on corruption, which he said contributed to soaring business costs if not curbed.

"Do not let graft become such a serious problem that Malaysians and their Government will be known as *hantu rasuah* (chronically corrupt).

"We do not want this to happen.



WELCOME ABOARD: Abdullah meeting wheelchair-bound Norsiah Baharom, who has been employed by the Public Services Commission for four months, at the gathering in Putrajaya yesterday.

We do not want such a nasty image.

"We must go all out to control it. Otherwise, the price of goods and the cost of doing business can go up and the burden is shifted to the consumers. We must not let this happen."

He said the Government's decision to reduce the fuel subsidy, allowing the price of fuel to rise by 30 sen per litre, may be unpopular but it was inevitable.

Abdullah reiterated his call for all to help curb profiteering and smuggling.

He said enforcement against of-

fenders should be effective and aggressive.

"I was told yesterday that smuggling of diesel was rampant at the Malaysia-Thailand border. There are few cars there but, ironically, the petrol stations there always report a shortage of supply.

"Who is using these millions of litres of diesel? We do not want diesel to be exploited by smugglers for their own benefit.

"We must not allow greedy Malaysians to do this at the expense of the majority of other Malaysians."

Abdullah said the Government would find pragmatic ways to improve public income.

"We have a tradition of overcoming problems and obstacles.

"We will continue to do so in tackling problems arising from the hike in the price of petrol so that we can ease the people's burden."

Also present at the gathering were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdullah Md Zin and Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Samsudin Osman.