

PM: We must be thrifty

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Be efficient and don't waste, civil servants told

STARBITES

Tighten the belt

What? PM orders government ministries and departments to trim expenditure.

Why? To prevent wastage and cut cost.

PUTRAJAYA: The Government is practising what it preaches.

The Prime Minister has ordered all departments to trim their operating expenditures and do away with wasteful practices.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi also reminded civil servants that delays and corruption would add to costs.

"The Government must lead the way and needs to be thrifty. We cannot spend unnecessarily or excessively. I have reminded ministries and department many times on this.

"A circular has also been issued. One should not switch on the lights of the whole floor just to use a room. There should not be wastage in the Government," he said in his monthly address to staff of the Prime Minister's Department yesterday.

He said civil servants must remain efficient and not get involved in any corrupt activities.

"We do not want to hear about people giving 10% or 5% when dealing with the Government," he said.

"If a businessman has to pay money to get things done, it will increase the cost of running his business and he will pass on the cost to consumers, meaning all of us. The same applies to delays."

On personal expenditure, Abdullah said civil servants should draw up their expenses carefully and wisely to check inflation.

He said even if prices of goods and



LET ME SHOW YOU: Abdullah looking at the wrist watch worn by his deputy Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak before the meeting in Putrajaya yesterday.

services escalated due to the recent fuel price increase, it would not be so bad if people knew how to manage their spending.

"I urge all to be thrifty and careful in their spending. Allah abhors wastefulness. Let us work together to control inflation," he said.

"I also want better enforcement to ensure prices of goods, including

those in the price control list, are not increased indiscriminately. I also want stricter enforcement to check on petrol smuggling at the borders."

On the petrol subsidy, Abdullah said it took up 25% of the nation's total budget and 43% of the development budget, adding that this made managing development difficult.

"Being a considerate and sensitive

government, we continue to subsidise fuel prices. We have not removed the subsidy as claimed by certain groups," he added.

Abdullah also expressed confidence that the Government, with the public's commitment, would be able to handle the current situation well because "we have a good history of overcoming problems and obstacles."