

PM: Outside jobs must not affect official duties

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PUTRAJAYA: Civil servants who still need to take on part-time jobs despite the recent pay increase must ensure their work with the government is not affected, the prime minister said.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the government had given a larger percentage increase to lower-ranking workers because it was mindful of the difficulties they had in providing for their families, especially those with many children.

He said the government was not blind to the fact that there were those who had to work at night selling nasi lemak or kuih to make ends meet.

"They have to do all this because they want to earn an honest living. It is out of love for their families.

"They work until late at night, and even though they are tired, the next day they rise early for their official work. Over time, this can affect productivity.

"With the salary hike, I believe these activities can be reduced, perhaps it is no longer necessary now that they have higher incomes.

"But for those who still need to, don't work until midnight, until you are too tired."

Abdullah said this to staff of the Prime Minister's Department at their monthly assembly yesterday.

Under government general orders, civil servants are not barred from working part-time jobs, but they must get the approval of their department heads.

With higher salaries, civil servants should now give more focus to their work and prove to the pub-

lic that the pay increase was justified, Abdullah said. The pay hike will take effect from July 1.

"People have asked me whether the salary increase can be justified since the public still doubts the quality of the public delivery system. Efforts are already under way to make the system more efficient and, in time, I believe the people will come to accept that the salary increase was the right decision.

"It is necessary to prevent those who are desperate from doing something bad, including accepting bribes."

In reminding civil servants to increase their efficiency and output, Abdullah said they must remember that they themselves were the end-users of the public delivery system.

Therefore, they should work hard to improve the system and carry out the policies and decisions set by the government.

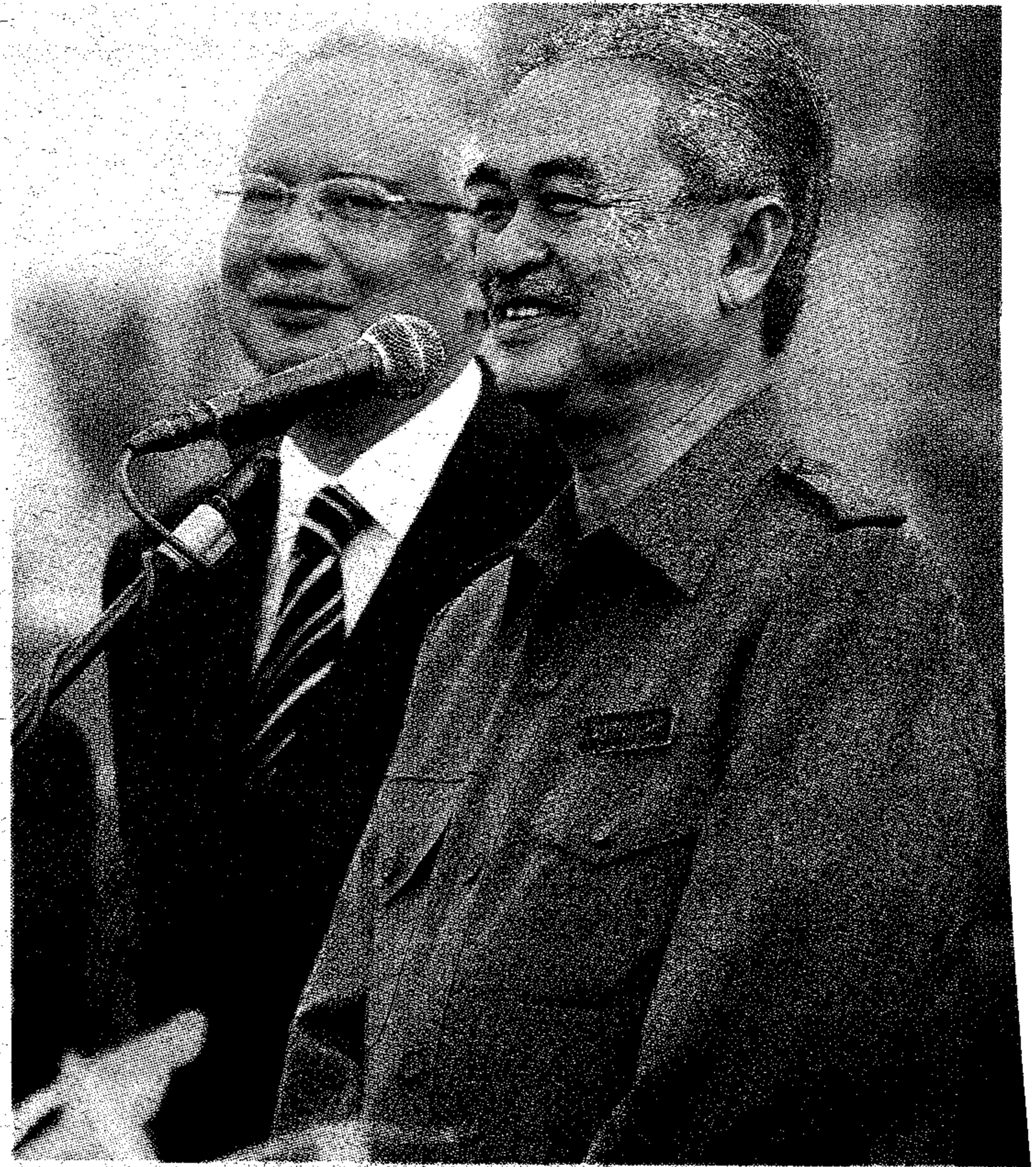
"Even though you may be a senior officer, you also depend on the services of certain departments, whether it is about housing, or land, or about a transfer for your wife or children's schooling.

"All of us need the services of other departments. This makes us all users who depend on efficient and prompt service.

"Therefore, it is imperative that we all perform our tasks well, quickly and efficiently, even though the volume of our workload increases."

He said there were times when some officers asked him for help in personal matters, such as speeding up job transfers or approvals for their children's school placements.

Abdullah said he did not inter-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi at the monthly assembly of the Prime Minister's Department yesterday. With him is Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

vene and had told the officers to settle the matter themselves with the relevant departments.

He urged all civil servants to budget their increased salaries wisely.

The government, on its part, would do its best to prevent the prices of goods from increasing.

"We will ensure prices don't go up so that civil servants can enjoy their pay increase and be able to

afford things they could not previously.

"Traders should also realise that if they raise prices, they make less in sales.

"If prices are not increased, people would be able to buy more and traders can enjoy bigger profits.

"This is how the government's salary hike can help the economy."