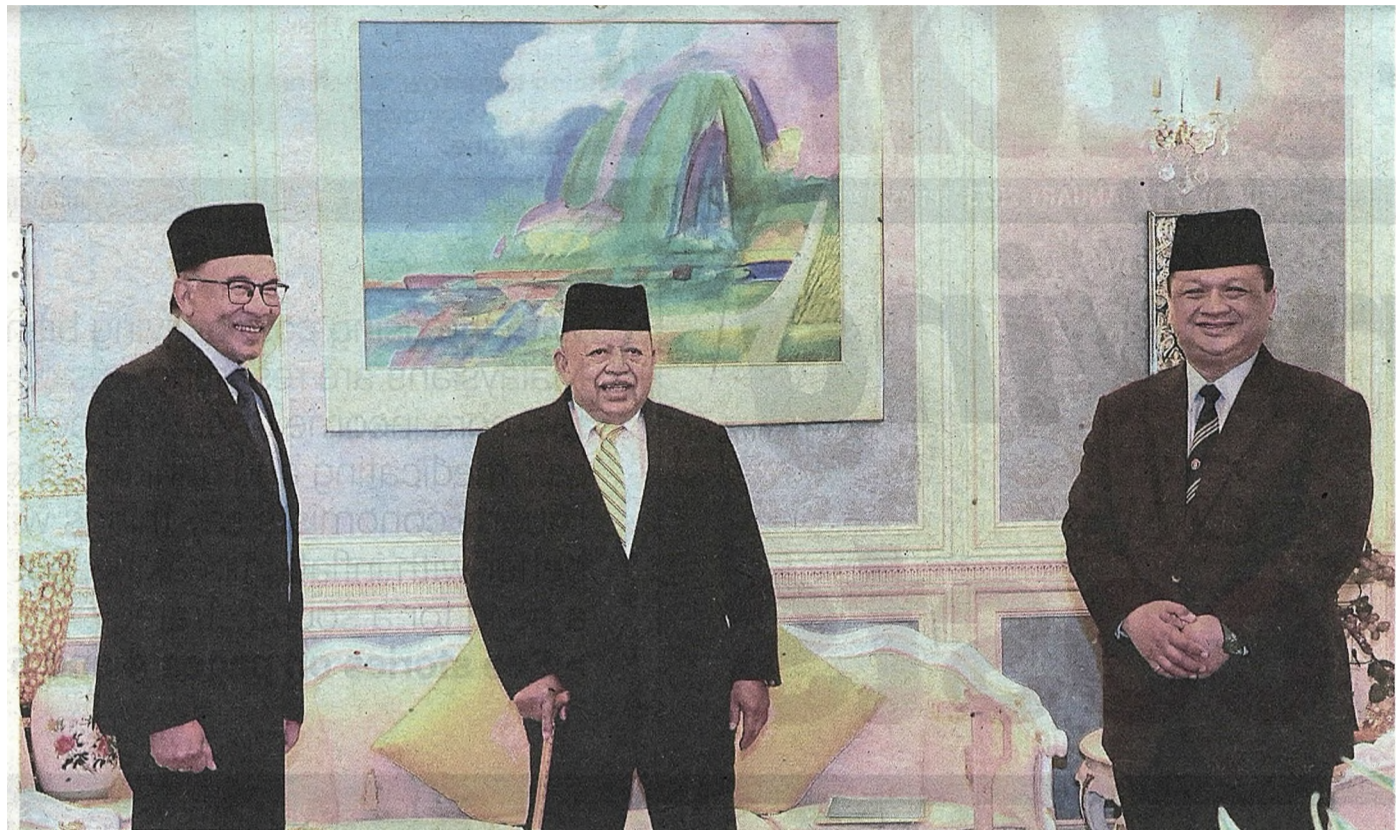


One for the album: Raja of Perlis Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Putra Jamalullail (centre) meeting Anwar (left) at Istana Arau. With them is the Raja Muda of Perlis Tuanku Syed Faizuddin Putra Jamalullail. - Bernama



'Alert me if it violates the law'

PM urges civil servants to speak up even if minutes come from him

By MAZWIN NIK ANIS
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PUTRAJAYA: Civil servants must alert Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim should they be handed minutes that violate the law, even if these come from him.

Issuing the directive during the Prime Minister's Department's monthly gathering, Anwar reminded civil servants that they should not subscribe to the "culture of contentment" or be satisfied with their work and performance.

He said he wanted to be informed should government officers be handed minutes that might not heed legal requirements.

This, he said, was so that no wrongdoing was committed, adding that he had pledged to run the country transparently.

"This is a clear directive from me. If there are minutes that violate laws and regulations, I must be informed. Even if this comes from me.

"More so if it comes from my officers, the deputy prime ministers

or the ministers," he said.

Minutes are notes jotted on letters that are usually sent to ministers or senior officials, stating a request for the relevant government officers to look into the matter as stated in the letter.

Anwar said he was aware that officers were reluctant to speak out if they came across certain problems or issues for fear of being transferred.

"But my directive is clear. I must be informed.

"At the onset of my administration, I have, among others, directed my Cabinet to appoint administrative and diplomatic (PTD) officers to hold the post of senior private secretary," he said.

This, said Anwar, was because these officers, who are civil servants, are clear on government procedures and rules, and would be able to advise their ministers accordingly.

A senior private secretary is the chief of staff in a minister's office.

Also present at the gathering yesterday were Deputy Prime Minister

Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Sabah and Sarawak), Datuk Armizan Ali and Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Zuki Ali.

Civil servants, said Anwar, should also strive to better serve the people through changes and renewal initiatives, and not be content with what they are presently doing.

"We must have the desire to bring about positive changes to the system. That is what I am determined to do when I lead this administration.

"It cannot just be enough, nor should we be content merely because we are now the prime minister, the deputy prime minister, the treasury general, or the head of the civil service.

"We must strive to do more and be better. We must have the humility to acknowledge that there are weaknesses, and we must have the determination to make changes," he said.

In KANGAR later, Anwar said the government will have to consider

the plight and the future of Employees Provident Fund (EPF) contributors before they are allowed another round of special withdrawals.

It was better for the government to look for other effective options to help those impacted by or who had lost their source of income due to the pandemic, he said.

Anwar said this is because most contributors have very small amounts of savings and if the government allows withdrawals again, it will affect the future of the contributors themselves.

"Too little ... I've checked the amount of savings and for a majority of contributors, it is too small, and I am very concerned about their future," he told reporters after attending a gathering with Perlis civil servants as reported by Bernama.

On Sunday, a group of EPF contributors, Pertubuhan Aktivis Rakyat Malaysia (ProRakyat), called on the government to consider another round of EPF withdrawals of up to RM30,000.