

PM: Civil service, not consultants, to take lead in policy-making

MANILA: The government has directed the civil service to take the lead in policy-making and strategy instead of relying on external consultants, said Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Anwar said Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Zuki Ali had "made the matter clear" to the civil service, and that he had raised it repeatedly in post-cabinet meetings, especially at the Prime Minister's Department and Finance Ministry.

The prime minister said the advice of third parties would not be

sought unless there were no experts in a certain field working for the government.

He said in such cases, civil servants would provide research recommendations for decision-making.

Anwar said guidelines on the matter had been issued.

"I raised this (on consultants) during the Budget discussions because I have faith in the ability of civil servants, who have the experience, expertise, and even the academic qualifications," Anwar told Malaysian journalists af-

ter meeting the Malaysian diaspora at the Malaysian ambassador's residence in Makati, here, yesterday evening.

"So if they need, for example, some help from consultants, that can be done, but it must be led by our team, then we train them. When they (civil servants) have the exposure, they can train the younger ones."

The prime minister, who was attending the final event of his two-day official visit to the Philippines, was asked to elaborate on his response during a

question-and-answer session, where he said past governments had an over-reliance on external consultants, which cost hundreds of millions in taxpayers' money.

Malaysia has 1.7 million civil servants.

On floods, the prime minister wanted sufficient allocations to be channelled to victims in Johor, Pahang, Negri Sembilan, Sabah and Melaka.

Anwar said he had discussed the matter with his deputy, Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi,

who is also National Disaster Management Committee chairman, on the latest situation and types of assistance that could be provided before flying home from the Philippines yesterday.

"I have discussed the matter with the deputy prime minister (Zahid) so that there are sufficient allocations for the flood victims," he said.

Anwar also wanted construction of a Bailey bridge in Felda Selancar, Rompin, where a road collapsed on Wednesday, to be expedited.