

COST-SAVING MEASURE

PM PULLS PLUG ON BERLIN TRIP

Cabinet decided to axe visit to Germany by 68 govt officials to curtail excessive spending, he says

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AN upcoming overseas trip for 68 government officials has been cancelled as Prime Minister

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's administration tries to curtail excessive public spending. "We are more stringent and decided on this in the cabinet meeting on Wednesday," he told reporters after Friday prayers in

Kampung Pasir here. "All new projects (and) overseas trips must be referred to the secretary-general or director (of the ministry or agencies) and approved by the minister."

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said the trip to Berlin, Germany, was for an exhibition involving government officials. The cancellation was made despite the hotel and flight bookings already being made.

He said it was part of the government's reforms on ministries, departments and agencies.



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim leaving Masjid Darussalam, Kampung Batu 14, Puchong, after Friday prayers. PIC BY AIZUDDIN SAAD

"I have to be strict (about this) as (government) trips abroad will incur costs on the people's money."

DATUK SERI ANWAR IBRAHIM
prime minister

"The trip cancellation, through this stern decision, will send a clear message. The ministers must present (the budgeting) to the cabinet and we will normally make the necessary cuts, otherwise we forego or postpone the trip to save costs."

He said the chief secretary to the government, Public Service Department director-general and secretaries-general whom he met had agreed

with the stance.

He said the majority of civil servants understood and supported the move; and agreed that such things "must not be allowed".

In Putrajaya, government spokesman and Communications Minister Fahmi Fadzil said any overseas trips for ministry officials must be signed off by the respective ministers as the government wanted to improve governance and save on cost.

He said this was Anwar's directive as part of efforts to reduce the country's debt.

Previously, all overseas trips only needed approval from ministry secretaries-general.

"The prime minister wishes to improve management and governance. Regarding overseas

trips, there needs to be a rationalisation of the number of people going, whether it could be reduced, and where cost savings can be made. All of this should be taken into consideration.

"We are working to reduce the country's debt. Therefore, the prime minister wants to scrutinise all aspects, including overseas trips," he said after the Communications Ministry's monthly assembly.

Fahmi added that the government would review all aspects of service delivery and project mechanisms to ensure that there were no stalled projects.

"What is clear is that the prime minister wants to ensure every ringgit and sen of the rakyat is spent wisely," he said.