

PM: Official trips abroad must have ministerial approval

PUCHONG: All projects, trips and tasks abroad involving government ministries, companies and agencies must have approval of ministers, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said the applications must be earlier referred to the ministry's secretary-general and department head.

Anwar said the decision to require ministerial approval was made because some boards within government companies and agencies appeared to be making decisions in their own interests.

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said he had personally cancelled an application involving a ministry and government agency, which had registered 68 staff members to attend a small exhibition in Berlin.

"Even though hotel and flight tickets had been arranged, I cancelled it as only a small number may be necessary for the task.

"This is a violation of the rules.



All smiles: Anwar greeting the public after performing Friday prayers at Masjid Darussalam in Puchong. - Bernama

This is public money and we must be responsible.

"Earlier, I held a meeting with the Chief Secretary to the Government, the Public Service director-general, all secretaries-general and department heads, where I emphasised the government's

firmness on the matter and asked for their cooperation," he said to reporters after performing Friday prayers at Masjid Darussalam here yesterday, Bernama reported.

The Prime Minister explained that all ministers were responsi-

ble for any approval given.

"Ministers, when travelling to any country, must present a paper to the Cabinet, and we usually cut down on whether this staff member or that staff member is needed or if no staff are needed at all.

"Or maybe it's better to postpone the trip and align it with the Prime Minister's visit, where MOUs can be signed during the event, which will save costs," he said.

He said reforms within the government must be carried out continuously, and any violation of the effort would not be tolerated.

On another matter, Anwar denied that the police had closed the investigation into a case related to a disabled hailing driver who was allegedly beaten by a dignitary's escort in May.

He said the public should let police conduct their investigation, which may take some time.

"Who said the case is closed? This case is indeed a matter of concern. I have personally taken

note of this, even on other matters involving ordinary people.

"Our country has laws; everything must have facts and clear evidence. Once the police investigation is complete, we will leave it to the Attorney General's Chambers to decide which party is charged or not, and this must all be based on facts," he said.

Earlier this month, the media reported that nearly 200 individuals representing groups of disabled people, activists and non-governmental organisations as well as hailing workers called for the Prime Minister's intervention.

On a separate matter, Anwar said Malaysia condemned the recent attacks on pagers and other communication devices in Lebanon, which are believed to have been orchestrated by Israel.

He criticised the attacks, calling them inhumane.

"There are women and children who are victims," he said.