

Thursday is batik day

Civil servants to don batik attire weekly

THE STAR 16/11/08 M1214

BY MAZWIN NIK ANIS and
M. KRISHNAMOORTHY
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: Civil servants will now have to wear colourful batik attire every Thursday from tomorrow instead of having to wear them only twice a month.

Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Sidek Hassan said a circular on the sartorial code, signed by Public Services Department director-general Tan Sri Ismail Adam, was issued yesterday.

He said that apart from wanting to give Malaysian batik a boost by getting civil servants to wear it more often, the decision to have civil servants wear batik garments on Thursdays was "to make it easy for them to remember as to when they should put on their batik shirts".

"We will see more civil servants wearing batik from now on and it will have to be Malaysian batik, of course," he told reporters after closing a seminar on public delivery systems yesterday.

Sidek said that previously, the practice was for civil servants to wear batik to work on Saturdays and this was later changed to every first and 15th day of the month, beginning June 2005.

He said it was not practical for Fridays to be

made "batik day" because many people, particularly men, would want to don traditional garments.

The idea of promoting Malaysian batik was first mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's late wife Datin Paduka Seri Endon Mahmood.

At the launch of the Malaysia Batik Week in 2004, she emphasised the need for everyone to wear batik and not just civil servants.

True to Endon's call, Abdullah has not only worn Malaysian batik frequently but has also promoted the Malaysian batik identity at international forums and conventions.

Cuepacs president Omar Osman welcomed the Government's move to make batik the official attire every Thursday.

"We support the idea to create an original Malaysian identity through batik. I hope that the various departments and government agencies will create their own design," Omar said. "The departments must provide them to the employees as batik attire will be our uniform every Thursday."

On another matter, Sidek said Cuepacs' request for the Government to pay honorarium in lieu of bonus for civil servants had not been discussed yet. He said he was waiting for the most "appropriate time" to meet with Abdullah on the issue.