

Wednesday, 14 November 2007

12 suspended after being charged in court

PUTRAJAYA: Twelve civil servants, four of whom were federal officers from the professional and management group, have been suspended after they were charged in court recently over alleged irregularities as exposed by the auditor-general. Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Sidek Hassan said the suspension was in line with civil service procedures.

He said the suspension of the four federal officers would be in force until the court decided on their cases. They will receive half pay during the suspension. An officer, also in the management and professional group of a statutory body, has also been suspended since Oct 30. He will be paid the same amount of emolument throughout his suspension.

The suspension of seven other officers in the support group category, one of whom is from the federal level, took effect between Oct 23 (four people), Oct 24 (two) and Nov 5 (one). Sidek said the officers would also be paid 50 per cent emolument every month.

He said if convicted, heads of departments must recommend to the commission whether the officers should be sacked, demoted or slapped with other forms of punishment or face no further action, depending on the severity of the cases.

Two of the cases before the courts involved a Raub Welfare Department officer who is said to have claimed RM12,175 in financial aid meant for 22 poor recipients who are dead. Also, five welfare officers have been charged with certifying cash payments under the Old Age Assistance Scheme to dead recipients. The Anti-Corruption Agency is also investigating other government departments cited in the report.

In Kuala Lumpur, Public Accounts Committee chairman Datuk Shahrir Samad said the Auditor-General's Department would be carrying out internal audits of all government departments and agencies. At present, it only conducts external auditing while internal auditing is carried out by the departments' own staff.

Shahrir said Auditor-General Tan Sri Ambrin Buang informed him the move was taken following the disclosure of various irregularities on public expenditure in the Auditor-General's Report 2006.

Thursday, 15 November 2007

ACA: Report suspicious activities

GEORGE TOWN: The Anti-Corruption Agency can only act on the findings of the 2006 Auditor-General's Report if elements of corruption are involved. ACA deputy director-general (I) Datuk Abu Kassim Mohamed said this was because the report was only on procedural issues. The heads of the various government departments and ministries would have to take action against their staff if procedures were not followed, he added.

"We will step in if we find any element of corruption," he said at a press conference yesterday. He had earlier given a closed-door lecture on "Strengthening Ethics, Defending Integrity and Enhancing Organisation" at Universiti Sains Malaysia's campus here. Abu Kassim said the ACA was still reviewing the findings of the report to determine if corruption was involved.

He also urged department heads to co-operate with the ACA by reporting any suspicious activities. So far, 12 civil servants have been charged with alleged fraud and mismanagement of funds following the publication of the report.

They have also been suspended from their jobs since last month and early this month. He also said the ACA has set up a special centre to provide advice to the private and public sectors.

"It will assist those who are unclear about corruption involving non-monetary items such as gifts of hampers," he said, adding that the centre had received more than 200 enquiries since it was set up before Hari Raya last month.