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NEWS / Nation

CALL FOR ACTION

ACT ON AG'S REPORT, MINISTERS TOLD

Mistakes still occurring despite the fact it is tabled annually, says Anwar

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has instructed members of his cabinet to study all remarks made in the Auditor General's Report 2021 on expenses, leakages and matters on non-compliance affecting their ministries.

He said this was because despite the report being tabled annually together with recommendations, such mistakes were still being repeated.

Speaking after chairing the cabinet meeting at Perdana Putra here yesterday, Anwar said ministers had studied the report.

However, he said, he decided not to disclose it so that relevant agencies under the ministries could make their response.

"I have told the ministers to seriously look into this report so that the mistakes are not repeated."

"The Auditor General's Report always contains recommendations, but the same mistakes are repeated year after year."

He said the National Audit Department would reveal the report at a suitable time. The report, he added, would be tabled at the next parliamentary sitting on Feb 13.

He said such report was important because repeated mistakes had been detected, such as a lack of monitoring that allowed leakages to occur and the handing over of matters to companies that did not comply with rules.

He said it was the ministries' task to look at the audit report and called for agencies to explain and determine if further actions were needed.

"Every single ministry must take it as part of its responsibility to look into the criticism of their ministry."

"Although these happened in the past, it is necessary to remind



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim with his deputy, Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (left), Transport Minister Anthony Loke (second from left) and Works Minister Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi after the cabinet meeting in Putrajaya yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

our public servants that it is their duty to maintain integrity and competency."

Anwar said during his time in the Education Ministry, allegations of impropriety in the sale of textbooks and abuse of power by principals had been raised.

He said in less severe cases, the parties could be compounded and issued a warning. Past reports, he added, had included recommendations to dismiss those responsible.

Anwar also announced that the government would appoint a Children's Commissioner under the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam) as part of efforts to address abuse and other social issues affecting children.

He said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi would chair a social committee to study problems involving children and issues, which came under the jurisdiction of Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri.

It is understood that details of the commissioner's appointment would be announced by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reform) Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said.

Azalina had, on Jan 7, again proposed an independent children's commission to safeguard the rights of children.

She had first proposed the com-

mission in 2021.

On another development, Anwar said the government was looking into increasing the number of High Court judges for Sabah and Sarawak due to the rise in the number of cases.

"A proposal was also submitted on the addition of High Court judge positions for Sabah and Sarawak. We are giving it some priority, especially due to the increase in cases in Sabah and Sarawak."

Anwar said the process of appointing High Court judges in Sabah and Sarawak had to be referred to the respective Yang di-Pertua Negeri before the names were presented to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

He said this was per the requirements of the Federal Constitution.

He said the cabinet meeting also agreed that the government examine the needs of court buildings in Sabah and Sarawak, which were found to be in poor state.

The prime minister also announced a toll exemption for highway users nationwide on Jan 20 and 21 for the Chinese New Year.

He said the toll-free rides would involve all classes of vehicles and an allocation of RM40 million.

"This is to benefit all Malaysians, not only the Chinese, but also the Malays and Indians who want to return to their hometowns for the holidays," he said.

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Avoid recurring blunders pointed out in AG's Report, PM urges Cabinet

PUTRAJAYA: Ministers have been directed to find ways to ensure mistakes and issues highlighted in the Auditor-General's Report are not repeated, said the Prime Minister.

In his latest directive to his Cabinet, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim wants them to look for solutions to the problems highlighted in the report.

The Prime Minister said the AG report would usually come with recommendations and suggestions on how to rectify the problems.

"But we will see the same mis-

takes being repeated over and over again. This has to stop," he told the media after chairing the weekly Cabinet meeting here yesterday.

He said the ministers' focus should be on issues related to expenditure, leakages and failure to abide by regulations.

"These matters must be given serious attention by the Cabinet so that the mistakes will not be repeated," he added.

Anwar said if the mistake warrants further action and a report to be made, then the ministers should

order it to be done.

The Prime Minister stated that the ministries should take the issues and weaknesses highlighted in the AG Report seriously.

"Every ministry must make it their responsibility to look at the criticisms, even if the problems were in the past.

"This is so that civil servants are always reminded of their duty and responsibility to maintain their integrity and diligence," he added.

On another matter, Anwar said civil servants are free to speak up

about mistakes committed by ministers, including himself, at post-Cabinet meetings.

"If they are not comfortable doing so, they can meet the ministers and raise the matter with them personally," he added.

Likewise, ministers should also point out weaknesses in the civil service.

"This is what working as a team is all about. We must be able to give opinions and have our mistakes pointed out. It wouldn't be of any help if there were violations, but we

are afraid to point them out," he said.

On Monday, Anwar told civil servants to alert him if they are given minutes that violate the law, even if the minutes came from him. He wants to be informed so that no wrongdoings are committed, as he has pledged to run the country transparently.

Watch the video
[TheStarTV.com](https://www.thestar.com.my/video)



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Ministries should tackle issues highlighted by the Auditor General's report.

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

PUBLICISE AUDIT REMEDIAL ACTION

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has urged members of his cabinet to scrutinise the remarks in the Auditor General's (AG) Report 2021.

He specifically referred to comments and suggestions on expenses, leakages and non-compliance with conditions and regulations.

He did not give the ministers a time frame to report on their progress. But I hope the work will be done sooner rather than later.

A directive such as this is long overdue. Anwar emphasised the fact that mistakes had been repeatedly highlighted in such reports, such as a lack of monitoring, leakages, and handing over matters to companies that do not play by the rules.

He also said that when the audit report referred to problems, it was not necessarily about corruption.

Year in and year out, the AG had highlighted issues of accountabil-

ity, transparency, responsibility and negligence, but the ministries have not been making public the steps they have taken, if any, to address these issues.

This lack of public statements cover the following proposals.

In 2021, the AG's office delivered 33 reports, including 12 opinions on ministerial notifications, 289 opinions on financial statements, and 252 certifications of financial and statistical information.

In 2020, the AG's report said that Putrajaya incurred RM620 million in losses due to financial mismanagement.

In 2019, the AG's report made 23 recommendations to three ministries (defence; women, family and community development and education) and seven federal departments.

In 2018, the AG submitted eight recommendations on the financial management of federal ministries, departments and statutory bodies.

In addition, 99 recommendations were presented on the activities of ministries, departments and federal statutory bodies, as well as 100 recommendations to better manage ministries, departments, agencies and state government companies.

In 2017, the National Audit Department identified 247 shortcomings involving federal and state authorities.

I am not saying that no remedial action has been taken, but the public perception is that little has been done.

It is important, therefore, that the ministries take the AG's reports seriously, and report remedial actions to Parliament.

This will let the public know that no stone has been left unturned in ensuring taxpayers' monies are used properly.

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ANGLIMA TENTERA LAUT KE-1



Newly appointed Royal Malaysian Navy chief Admiral Datuk Abdul Rahman Ayub delivering his maiden speech at Wisma Pertahanan in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. With him are (from left) RMN deputy chief Vice Admiral Datuk Sabri Zali, Western Fleet commander Vice Admiral Datuk Abu Bakar Md Ajis and National Defence Studies Centre president Rear Admiral Zulhelmy Ithnain. PIC BY ASWADI ALIAS

NEW AGREEMENT TO BE INKED

Navy to get 5 littoral combat ships, not 6

KUALA LUMPUR: The procurement of the first batch of littoral combat ships (LCS) has been reduced from six to five vessels.

Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) chief Admiral Datuk Abdul Rahman Ayub said the government decided to continue with the LCS procurement with fewer vessels.

"It was originally six, but when we submitted the application and discussed this matter again, we agreed for the LCS to be reduced to five.

"The LCS project is continuing as usual.

"The implementation is going well and a sixth additional agreement will be signed soon.

"This allows for the next pro-

cess to run and the construction to be carried out as planned," he said at a press conference here yesterday.

Earlier, Rahman delivered his maiden speech after being appointed as the 18th RMN chief at Wisma Pertahanan here.

Present were his deputy Vice Admiral Datuk Sabri Zali and Commander of the Western Fleet Vice Admiral Datuk Abu Bakar Md Ajis.

Rahman said he hoped the LCS would be delivered on schedule because the RMN lacked high-capacity assets.

"With the LCS, we can carry out tasks in a more accomplished manner," he said.

On Jan 5, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan said the government would go ahead with the LCS procurement to strengthen the navy's capabilities.

The LCS procurement is the largest in the history of the Defence Ministry, with a value of RM9 billion. The contract was signed in 2013 and all the vessels were supposed to have been delivered in August last year.

The Public Accounts Committee, in its report on Aug 4 last year, said the government had paid RM6.083 billion to shipbuilder Boustead Naval Shipyard Sdn Bhd but not a single vessel had been delivered.

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FALSE SOCSO CLAIMS

Company owner faces 5 more charges

SHAH ALAM: A company owner was charged again in the Sessions Court here yesterday with submitting false documents to the Social Security Organisation (Socso) to claim incentives under the Penjana Kerjaya 2.0 and 3.0 programmes amounting to RM87,500 two years ago.

Raymond Sim, 35, pleaded not guilty to the five charges. The offences were allegedly committed at the Socso branch offices in Petaling Jaya and Klang between March 9 and Nov 11, 2021.

He was charged with submitting documents containing false information in the Employee Verification Form for the Employee Recruitment Incentive Programme under the name of Minbot Sdn Bhd to three Socso officers.

However, the names of the employees in the list were not employed by the company.

The charges were framed under Section 18 of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Act 2009 and punishable under Section 24 (2) of the same law, which provides imprisonment for up to 20 years and a fine not less than five times the value of the subject matter of the offence or RM10,000 whichever is higher, if convicted.

Judge Rozilah Salleh allowed Sim bail of RM10,000 with one surety and ordered him to sur-



Raymond Sim (left) pleaded not guilty to submitting false documents to the Social Security Organisation to claim incentives under the Penjana Kerjaya 2.0 and 3.0 programmes. PIC BY FAIZ ANUAR

render his passport to the court, as well as report himself at the nearest MACC office once a month.

She allowed a request by MACC prosecuting officer Mohd Alif Shahraruzaman Mohd Alif for the

case to be transferred to the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court for it to be heard with another similar case faced by the accused.

The court set Feb 28 for mention at the Sessions Court.

On Jan 26, Sim, represented by

lawyer Reuben Ong, pleaded not guilty in the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court to seven counts of committing a similar offence involving incentive claims amounting to RM153,200. **Bernama**