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Mahathir-Auditors

AUDITORS MUST PRIORITISE INTEGRITY IN THEIR WORK, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 7 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that auditors must prioritise integrity and not be influenced by certain sentiments when discharging their duties.

They should not allow themselves to be used by some parties, including the media, to substantiate any suspicion solely to implicate a person, the prime minister said.

"In fact, auditors should not be swayed by public sentiment or by the party being audited, including the government departments," he told a media conference after opening the Commonwealth Auditors-General's Conference, here.

He said there were not many cases involving offences by auditors reported in government departments in the country.

Most of the cases involved procedural offences which could be handled in various ways like sidelining the officer concerned and inter-departmental fines.

He said that there were not many police reports of such cases and the audit reports of government departments in Malaysia were good compared with those of some countries.

"There is nothing major, nothing serious like pocketing money. We take corrective action," he said.

Earlier, in his speech, the prime minister urged the auditors-general to take cognisance of what independence was all about in relation to professionalism in public-sector auditing and reporting.

"An auditor-general very often, in the course of discharging his duties, becomes privy to highly confidential matters or even secrets pertaining to national defence or national economy.

"Reporting for the sake of public excitement and sensationalising certain issues should be avoided. The auditor-general should exercise professional judgment to weigh the pros and cons of disclosing such matters to the public, as the repercussions may be far-reaching and detrimental to the long-term interest of the nation as a whole," he said.

About 100 auditors from 37 Commonwealth countries are taking part in the three-day conference themed "Re-Engineering Auditing in the Public Sector".

The triennial conference is aimed at enhancing cooperation among the auditors-general of the Commonwealth countries to develop knowledge and professionalism in the field of auditing, accounting and international finance.

It is also aimed at enhancing information and exchanging experience among the auditors-general and senior officers of universal audit institutions in the latest auditing methodology.

-- BERNAMA

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