

Anwar: RM1.4bil in contingencies fund missing
Malaysiakini.com
November 8 ,2011
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The opposition claims about RM1.4 billion of the Treasury's contingencies budget has gone missing.

The contingencies fund, provided for under Article 103 of the constitution, was allocated RM1.5 billion, Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim said.

This allocation is stated in the 2012 estimated federal expenditure report that was tabled together with the 2012 Budget, he said.

Article 103 states: "Parliament may by law provide for the creation of a contingencies fund and for authorising the minister charged with responsibility for finance, if satisfied that there has arisen an urgent and unforeseen need for expenditure for which no other provision exists, to make advances from the contingencies fund to meet that need.

"Where any advance is made in accordance with Clause (1), a supplementary estimate shall be presented and a Supply Bill introduced as soon as possible for the purpose of replacing the amount so advanced."

Anwar told a press conference at the Parliament lobby today: "However, the 2010 Auditor-General's Report states that there is only a remainder of RM79.147 million in the fund.

"Where has the money gone to? More seriously, where has it gone missing, the RM1.4 billion? I don't think the audit department (made a mistake), they are more meticulous when it comes to accounting."

Anwar also hinted that the "inordinate 17-day delay" in the release of the audit report might have been to hide this fact.

The bulky 31-volume report critiques federal and state expenditure, as well as debt and accounting discrepancies, and assesses the national fiscal health.

It is usually tabled prior to the Budget to allow parliamentarians to debate issues it raises, during the policy stage debate of the annual Supply Bill.

However, the report this year was tabled later than the Budget - for the second consecutive year.

As a former finance minister, Anwar said the contingencies fund is set aside for emergency purposes.

"Now we are forced to suspect there are some other compelling reason why they chose not to table the audit report at the right time," he said, adding that the discrepancies in the fund was also "an attempt to mislead the House".

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