

NEW STRAITS TIMES

DATE: 12 / 09 / 2007

> REACTIONS TO AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

# Abdullah orders ministries to explain to cabinet

NST- 12/9/2007

■ **By Firdaus Abdullah and Deborah Loh**  
news@nst.com.my

**KUCHING:** Ministries implicated in the Auditor-General's report for mismanaging funds and other irregularities must explain to the cabinet through their respective ministers, the prime minister said.

"The report has raised many questions and those involved must explain why such things happened.

"During the last cabinet meeting, before I left for the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation) meeting, I had directed all ministers to check matters pertaining to their respective ministries and report to the cabinet.

"Ministers must ensure that each matter raised in the Auditor-General's report is studied and explained in detail," Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

The prime minister was asked to comment on the report, which disclosed cases of wastage of public funds in several ministries and government agencies.

Abdullah, here to take part in the Malaysia Merdeka celebrations on Monday evening, was speaking at a press conference before departing for Singapore.

Several ministries have started probing departments and agencies under their purview, whose spending was highlighted in the report is-

sued last Friday.

The Treasury had already responded to portions of the report, elaborating on the expenditures in some of the more glaring revelations.

On Monday, Second Finance Minister Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop said the units under the ministry had been directed to prepare an immediate accounting of the irregularities contained in the report.

In Putrajaya, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz said the Anti-Corruption Agency would question ministers if necessary over the Auditor-General's Report 2006.

"The ACA can see anybody, whether minister or secre-

tary-general.

"If they find that they need to meet the minister, it is within their right to do so. It is not necessary that all ministers must be interviewed, just those involved in the process," Nazri said after attending the ACA's annual debate competition for secondary school students.

"If there is any abuse of power, any corrupt act in the report, then there is nothing to stop the ACA from taking action.

"The Auditor-General's report is an official report. If the ACA can investigate anonymous letters, what more something reported officially.

"We must take the report seriously and take action as the

same thing comes back every year. If it keeps coming back, something is really wrong."

Nazri said the ACA should be given time to study the report and conduct investigations.

He said while the Auditor-General had highlighted mistakes made by certain ministries and departments, these still had to be verified.

The Auditor-General's report cannot be used as a basis for pressing charges until more information and clarification was obtained, he added.

ACA director-general Datuk Ahmad Said Hamdan said all ministries mentioned in the report would be looked into.