

ACT ON AG'S REPORT, MINISTERS TOLD

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

MOHAMED BASYIR
AND TEH ATHIRA YUSOF
PUTRAJAYA
news@nst.com.my

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.