

IMPROVING GOVERNANCE

Prepare reviews based on AG report, dept heads told

PUTRAJAYA: Government department heads have been told to prepare detailed reviews based on issues raised in the Auditor General's (AG) Report.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday said it would not only tackle issues involving the departments, but also prepare a framework to improve governance.

"I will suggest to the chief secretary to the government that the minutes of discussions on the reports (are taken) to be submitted to the chief secretary to the government," he said at the Prime Minister's Department monthly assembly.

The reports, said Anwar, would discuss the advice and recommendations of the AG, as well as issues involving the departments to ensure the weaknesses highlighted would not be repeated.

"When I was the finance minister (in the late 1990s), I chaired the anti-corruption management committee (and) we had reviewed the auditor general's report, where we found reoccurring problems.

"If you read the report a few years ago, a watch worth RM400 was charged RM4,000, and some school books that did not reach students was paid for.

"This is what I called attempting to achieve excellence without

a soul."

Due to policy, the government spent billions of ringgit on subsidies that had benefited the super rich and 3.5 million foreigners, he said.

After restructuring, he said, more than RM4 billion could be saved for electricity subsidy, for instance, as the top 10 per cent of earners no longer qualified for it.

On another matter, he said he hoped to see more investments from China in Tanjung Malim.

"The Chinese vice-president (Han Zheng) is expected to arrive in Malaysia in a few days.

"I have arranged a visit to Tanjung Malim (in hopes) to increase investments from the previously announced production target of half a million vehicles."

In Kuala Lumpur later, he said the government would provide further explanation on the proposed constitutional amendments resolving the issue of citizenship, which would grant Malaysian women married to foreigners and give birth overseas the right to pass down citizenship to their children.

The government, with the support of two Perikatan Nasional members of parliament, has the support of 149 lawmakers, one seat more than the two-thirds majority required for the amendments to be approved.