

Audit firms need to act independently, says Anwar

By **MARTIN CARVALHO**
mart3@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: There have been previous occasions where major audit firms were complicit in financial scandals, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said this was because the audit firms, including the larger firms, were not entirely free from becoming the target of excesses.

"Here in this country but also in the more developed, industrialised countries, there has been complicity at times.

"If you look, for example, at the 1MDB scandal, there was complicity with the big audit firms.

"This is why audit firms should be empowered to operate independently so that they can follow the trail of accountability wherever it leads," he said when closing the Asean Auditor Conference here yesterday.

In this respect, the Prime



End of a successful meet: The crowd listening as Anwar delivers the closing speech at the Asean Auditor Conference 2025 at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre.
- Bernama

Minister lauded the efforts by Auditor-General Datuk Seri Wan Suraya Wan Mohd Radzi despite shouldering the unpopular job of conducting audits.

"That is why we have this 'woman of steel' as the Auditor-General. It is a tough and extreme-

ly unpopular task, but it doesn't matter to her as she is not contesting in the elections," he said.

Anwar noted that while good governance is important, the role played by independent auditor firms and the Auditor-General Department is pivotal in ensur-

ing accountability.

"I have mentioned this to my Cabinet colleagues that even I don't determine what should be the results or the priority of the Auditor-General's Report.

"They had, of course, briefed me over the past two weeks or so

on the report. But they briefed me not for me to interfere and change what their report had said.

"The briefing is for me to present it to the Cabinet before it is tabled in Parliament for debate. This is what is meant to have good governance and transparency."

Anwar said the independence of such audit reports would also strengthen good governance and integrity within the administration.

"This will ultimately be reflected in sustaining continued improvements in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI)," he added.

Anwar said this was the message he had stressed during the Asean Summit for audit firms to act independently to ensure good governance and accountability.