

SINCE 2024

Govt recovered RM159m via follow-up audits

KUALA LUMPUR: The government has recovered and safeguarded RM159 million through follow-up audits since last year, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said.

He said the recovery was part of broader reforms aimed at boosting governance and restoring public confidence in institutions, with auditors playing a central role in ensuring transparency and protecting public funds.

“To deal swiftly with critical breaches, we established a Serious Irregularities Committee.

“It did not make front-page news, but it goes to the heart of the matter: holding offenders accountable and protecting national resources,” he said at the Asian Confederation of Institutes of Internal Auditors Conference 2025.

Anwar added that the National Audit Department’s mandate had also been strengthened through the first amendment to the Audit Act in 33 years — a reform he described as “essential, though not glamorous”.

With the theme “Internal Audit in a Polycrisis Era: Adapting, Assuring and Advancing”, the conference brought together nearly 1,500 governance professionals

from 26 countries. Present was Auditor General Datuk Seri Wan Suraya Wan Mohd Radzi.

Anwar said that four new auditing guidelines were introduced earlier this year, extending the department’s authority to any entity receiving public funds.

This “follow-the-public-money” approach, he said, was critical in curbing leakages and corruption while ensuring every ringgit of the national budget was spent as intended.

“Good governance is also a central pillar of the 13th Malaysia Plan, our latest five-year economic strategy towards 2030.

“Alongside policies to lift economic ambition and strengthen social protection, the plan makes clear that reforming the public service is essential.”

Anwar also said that good governance could not be achieved by the government alone, stressing the importance of cooperation from the private sector and professional bodies.

He said integrity and accountability must remain at the heart of governance as even the strongest economies could falter if corruption and leakages go unchecked.

He added that robust audit and internal audit systems were essential to curb excesses, strengthen transparency and safeguard the national administration from governance failures.

“The need for audits and internal audits in any system of national administration is crucial if we are serious about addressing major challenges of leakages, excesses, corruption and governance-related issues.

“As (Datuk Seri) Wan Suraya knows, I have given the broadest possible mandate for government machinery to be monitored, supervised and held accountable.

“This requires full cooperation from Bursa Malaysia, the Securities Commission and private companies,” he said.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said governance should not be seen as a burden but as a strategic asset — the anchor of credibility in markets, a magnet for investments and a guarantee that progress would be shared fairly.

He said good governance was also central to ensuring the effectiveness of the 13th Malaysia Plan, which was tabled in Parliament recently.