

NEW INITIATIVES

ANWAR: MAKE AUDITS FASTER, MORE EFFECTIVE

They must be orientated towards maximum impact and accountability, says PM

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday called for sweeping improvements to the national auditing system.

He urged the National Audit Department to adopt new initiatives, including the formation of a dedicated task force, to ensure audits were faster, more effective and could deliver tangible benefits to the public.

Anwar said audits must not place unnecessary burdens on the public but instead be orientated towards maximum impact and accountability.

"Therefore, I urge those present to ensure that audits are geared towards delivering real impact, not merely carried out as a rou-

tine practice.

"They must be implemented effectively in ways that truly benefit the people," he said at the National Audit Department's 120th anniversary celebration here yesterday.

Present were Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Dr Johari Abdul, Communications Minister Datuk Fahmi Fadzil, Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Shamsul Azri Abu Bakar and Auditor General Datuk Seri Wan Suraya Wan Mohd Radzi.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said delays in auditing could create room for leakages and abuse.

"If we claim that our auditing system is good and transparent, but yet it is slow and sluggish, it will inevitably create space for leakages, to occur. That is why audits must be faster and more precise."

He said public perception must be taken seriously, noting that new systems were often criticised for being overly complex or burdensome if not properly explained.

"Sometimes we introduce systems that are seen as troublesome. Every effort to improve is often resisted by those accus-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Auditor General Datuk Seri Wan Suraya Wan Mohd Radzi (left) at the National Audit Department's 120th anniversary celebration in Putrajaya yesterday. NSTP PIC BY MOHD FADLI HAMZAH

tomed to inefficiency. That is why public engagement is crucial," said Anwar, adding that insufficient communication could widen the gap between policy intentions and public understanding.

He said a robust and comprehensive auditing system was key to curb long-standing issues, such as fund misappropriation, abuse of power and leakages.

"The country must be safeguarded, and one way to do so is by ensuring that our auditing system is sophisticated, comprehensive and professionally managed," he added.

On the ringgit's recent appreciation against the US dollar, Anwar responded with "Alhamdulillah" to express his satisfaction with the local currency's performance.

At 5.30pm yesterday, the ringgit strengthened to 3.9660 against the greenback — a level

last seen in May 2018 — from 4.0045 on Friday.

Anwar said the ringgit's performance, now among the strongest in Asia, reflected political stability, sound governance and growing investor confidence under the Madani Economy framework.

Meanwhile, Wan Suraya said the first report generated under the e-SelfAudit system would be tabled in Parliament next month.

She said the department had completed audits on all 1,856 related entities, including government-linked companies, since the system's launch in February last year.

"The e-SelfAudit report will be tabled in Parliament for the first time next month," she said, adding that the artificial intelligence-based system marked a major step towards more responsive and efficient auditing.

Wan Suraya said amendments to the Audit Act 1957, approved last year, had empowered the auditor general to conduct audit follow-up actions through the Auditor General's Dashboard.

This has ensured that outstanding issues are resolved by ministries, agencies and government-linked entities.

She said the department's digitalisation efforts, including the Public Sector Auditing Transformation Programme and the establishment of a National Audit War Room, would further strengthen financial governance, data analytics capabilities and accountability.

Moving forward, she said the department would prioritise higher-impact audits, including evaluations of Sustainable Development Goals projects and programmes, to ensure public spending would deliver real value to the people and country.