

Ombudsman Bill awaits green light from Cabinet

THE Ombudsman Bill, which aimed at dealing with complaints about public service to ensure good and ethical governance, is being finalised, says Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said.

The Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reforms) said the Bill would then be sent for approval by the Cabinet.

"The Ombudsman will be a truly independent body practis-

ing an impartial concept towards handling grievances of the people about public service," she said in a statement.

"Institutions like the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission, Human Rights Commission (Suhakam), National Audit Department and Independent Police Conduct Commission (IPCC) are also used as a reference to determine policies under the

Ombudsman Bill," she added.

She went on to say that various engagement sessions were done with MPs, government agencies, NGOs and civil society organisations.

Meanwhile, Public Complaints Bureau (PCB) director-general S. Letchumanan Sahnmgam said the PCB would be dissolved once the Ombudsman Bill proposal becomes a law

He said the ombudsman's func-

tions would absorb that of the PCB.

"There will be a transition period of two years for this."

He said the move would affect some 180 PCB staff.

"PCB staff will have the option to choose whether to remain in the civil service or to join the ombudsman's office.

"Those remaining in the service will be transferred to other government departments or minis-

tries," he told the reporters.

He said the Public Complaints Management System (Sispa), currently being used by PCB, would continue to be used by the ombudsman for the public to lodge and track complaints.

In 2019, the Pakatan Harapan administration mooted the creation of an ombudsman following calls for an independent body to investigate complaints against maladministration.