

Audit clearances being denied to Secretary, Dzongda, College Presidents and elected heads for not clearing agency-level memos

Gups and Mangmis in danger with LG polls in January

Tenzing Lamsang/ Thimphu

In the past, the only way that an audit clearance could be denied to a senior official was if the memo was directly issued to them with either Direct Accountability or Supervisory Accountability.

However, the Royal Audit Authority (RAA) is enforcing its Audit Act and Rules more strictly from April 1, 2026, whereby RAA announced that Audit Clearance Certificates (ACC) will be withheld from heads of agencies with unresolved audit issues. So, even if the memo is not against the head 176.23 million (mn), 52 cases in the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) worth Nu 174.20 mn, 211 court cases worth Nu 641.11 mn, 19 cases of missing people worth Nu 13.92 mn, 15 cases in arbitration worth Nu 25.93 mn and 4 cases of no party showing up worth Nu 10.80 mn.

Strong follow-up

RAA official said that RAA is now doing bilateral follow-up meetings with agencies to clear remaining issues and other stakeholders too. RAA is also asking agencies to take certain issues either to the court or the OAG.

The RAA is also having meetings with the ACC and OAG in a 'carrot and stick' approach with very aggressive and very robust follow-ups until all issues are resolved.

Despite the above, some of the problems with the old cases are that no accountable person can be identified; no responsible person was originally recorded; the accountable person has moved to a different agency; responsibility has been officially transferred to another person; the accountable person is no longer available due to resignation, separation, relocation abroad, or death; the accountable person has already secured the required clearance; and incomplete, inaccurate, or improperly processed supporting documents.

There were also certain cases where accountability was assigned to the wrong person, or the responsible person was not informed of a memo and found out only later while processing for promotions or benefits.

RAA will be improving the system to ensure that accountability is fixed on the right people, including senior people and not just junior or mid-level people.

In the case of missing people, the agencies have to prove it by taking the case to court and getting the police to issue an arrest warrant. The RAA, ACC and OAG are working on an SOP for missing people.

Many of the unresolved audit observations have to do with the construction sector, as an official said that for other smaller observations, civil servants pay or resolve them early to get audit clearance.