

# Not worth the hassle of being hauled up by LHDN

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**PETALING JAYA:** The fear of being barred from travelling abroad is enough reason to make local social media influencers fulfil their obligations to the taxman and declare their incomes.

Saying that being stopped from leaving the country just for not paying taxes "is not worth the trouble", many urge their fellow social media influencers to promptly declare their earnings before they get called in by the Inland Revenue Board (LHDN).

Food influencer and content creator Cedly Ang, who is part of LHDN's "Rakan Strategik" (strategic partner) programme to create awareness among influencers and celebrities to declare their taxes, said he chose to abide by the law to prevent problems.

"I just don't want to get into trouble. I do not want to be restricted from travelling and we should know by now that taxes are for national development.

"I would like to see more step forward and declare their earnings, but one issue that many of them raised is that they don't know how or where to begin with," he said when contacted.

In a bid to help out, Ang said he took to his social media accounts which had a huge following to share tips on the matter.

Popular social media influencer and TV personality Ahmad Fedtri Yahya urged his peers to put more effort into learning and finding out how to declare their taxable incomes.

He said it was important to know financial management,



**Putting responsibility first:** (From left) Ang, Fedtri Yahya and Nur Aqalili are calling fellow influencers to declare their earnings.

adding that having a proper system would greatly help social media influencers with their tax declarations.

"Every time I have a chance to discuss filing taxes with others, I make an effort to listen, ask questions and read up. I have also attended events organised by LHDN.

"We should be able to plan, compile our expenses and make it systematic. If we have poor money management skills, that would be a problem, so always make the effort to discuss with others to gain knowledge," he said.

Also part of the Rakan Strategik programme, Ahmad Fedtri advised influencers against hiding their earnings from the taxman as it would spell trouble later on.

"You cannot hide your income. Maybe your name doesn't come up in the audit list this year, but get your documents ready, at least from five to seven years back, because it can happen any time.

"Based on my experience, LHDN staff are very helpful. They always answer my questions clearly so don't be afraid because they will help provide solutions," he added.

Content creator Nur Aqalili Azizan shared her experience in filing her taxes, saying the entire process was not as tedious as made out to be.

"No EA form? Don't worry, it was pretty straight forward.

"I totalled up my yearly income and filled in the EPF part and zakat.

"I also inserted an amount for the expenses that can be claimed.

"I have (an Excel) sheet where I put my monthly income details and it is a life saviour. That's how I keep track of earnings that are taxable," she said.

Nur Aqalili said dodging LHDN would not do any good as the board was efficient in keeping tabs on those who were errant.

"Content creators have an online presence, which means

that LHDN can easily keep track of activities based on one's postings.

"So, just file your taxes. It is very straightforward, especially if you're a small creator. But for big creators, there is always a way to outsource to make sure your taxes are filed," she added.

With the mushrooming of social media influencers in recent years, LHDN launched the Rakan Strategik programme last year through the Awareness, Education and Services (AES) initiative where 14 celebrities and influencers were appointed to be the agency's agents.

The 14 comprised individuals from various fields such as acting, hosting, singing, medical, lifestyle, financial management, investment and insurance.

According to LHDN, their appointments were made with the aim of disseminating authentic information on tax filing as well as providing education and tax awareness to the public.