

Malaysians lost RM1.2 billion to cybercrime in 10 months

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia has lost RM1.224 billion to cybercrime between January and October this year, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said this included losses due to online scams, telecommunications fraud, e-finance crimes, love scams, e-commerce fraud, non-existent loans and non-existent investments.

Among the actions taken to address this, he said, included arrest and seizure operations targeting syndicates that offered illegal money lending.

He told the Dewan Rakyat that seven licensed money-lending companies had been raided for violating Regulation 15A(b) of the Money Lenders (Control and Licensing) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.

“The problem lies in the existence of different roles played by money lenders, debt collectors, customer service officers, money mule agents, mule accounts, paint-splashing agents, and leaflet and banner distributors.

“This is indeed a serious issue because from an Asean perspective, the total losses incurred in online crimes amount to US\$64 billion,” he said.

He was responding to a question from Suhaizan Kaiat (PH-Pulai) in Parliament yesterday.

Suhaizan raised the issue of increasing cases of online crime and the measures taken against unlicensed money-lending outlets and online financial fraud.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said 136 investigation papers were opened, and 25 suspects had been charged.

He said enforcement efforts were focused on licensed money lenders and pawnbrokers registered under the Housing and Local Government Ministry, with collaboration from various law enforcement agencies.

Meanwhile, Anwar said the police’s Semak Mule portal had recorded complaints against 181,628 handphone numbers, 222,092 bank accounts and 1,395 companies suspected to be involved in online crime.

“The Semak Mule portal has been a significant help, with a total of 32,066,000 searches conducted, resulting in 22,200,984 positive responses.

“This means there were efforts to transfer funds to mule accounts, but many cases were intercepted thanks to the proactive use of the Semak Mule portal, accessible at <https://semakmule.rmp.gov.my>.”

Meanwhile, Bernama reported Anwar as saying that the National Scam Response Centre (NSRC) had prevented RM19 million from being transferred in online financial fraud, besides the seizure of RM6 million in suspected scam funds to date.

“Since its establishment until October this year, a total of 140,474 calls were received by NSRC, 69,000 of which involved financial fraud cases,” he said.