

PM up in arms over losses from corruption

PUTRAJAYA: “Shocking” was how Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim described the RM277bil in losses to corruption over a five-year period.

“We should not view lightly the issue of corruption.

“The problem of corruption has swelled to a figure which is shocking, exceeding billions,” the Prime Minister said in his speech when launching the National Anti-Corruption Strategies (NACS) 2024-2028 in Putrajaya International Convention Centre here yesterday.

He said in 1961 and 1962, Tun Abdul Razak Hussein - who would later become prime minister - had warned about the culture of corruption seeping into the nation, but his warnings went unheeded.

Anwar noted that the billions saved from corruption could have been used to address pressing development issues, particularly the eradication of poverty.

“Imagine the eradication of poverty, dilapidated schools and hospitals; and championing the wellbeing of the rakyat,

including farmers and fishermen.

“Almost all of these can be settled if the nation is saved from the greed of those in power, whether they are politicians, civil servants or from the private sector,” he added.

He acknowledged it would be pointless to have numerous anti-corruption plans and strategies if they were not backed by strong political will and direction.

“The scourge of corruption cannot be taken lightly.

“To combat this, you need a powerful, dedicated and courageous body, strong legislation and laws.

“More profoundly, you need clear political will and direction,” he said.

Earlier in his welcoming speech, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) chief commissioner Tan Sri Azam Baki said RM277bil had been lost to corruption between 2018 and 2023.

However, he said the launch of the National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP) 2019-2023 was one of the factors that

helped Malaysia improve its ranking in the global Corruption Perception Index in 2019.

He added that the goal was to see the country go below the 25th ranking on the corruption index within the next decade.

Malaysia managed to improve its position by four points on the ranking last year from 61 to 57 out of 180 countries.

The country also improved its score from 47 to 50, reversing a downtrend since 2019.

Anwar reminded the public that the fight against corruption rested not only on the shoulders of the MACC but the nation as a whole.

He said the MACC has been given the support to go after corruption regardless of rank or status.

“Irrespective of position or ill presumption made against us, I want to stress here that our job is to save the nation.

“The fate of the nation and wellbeing of the rakyat cannot be upheld if we allow those with power in the public service and

other enforcement agencies to feel it is their right to amass wealth and carry out administration based on the laws of the jungle,” he added.

Anwar expressed confidence that the NACS would help the nation’s fight against corruption as a whole.

He later launched the NACS, which replaces the NACP

The NACP, which ended last year, succeeded in implementing 85 initiatives or 77% out of the total of 111 initiatives.

The NACS, a continuation and improvement on the NACP, will focus on the wellbeing of the people through the Malaysia Madani agenda.