

RM277bil lost to corruption

Rakyat could have benefited from leakage over five years

By MARTIN CARVALHO,
ARFA YUNUS and ZAKIAH KOYA
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: The country lost at least RM277bil due to corruption in the last five years, says Tan Sri Azam Baki.

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) chief commissioner said this was based on a cumulative estimate of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

"Facing the challenge of fighting corruption in an increasingly complex borderless world is certainly far different from the approach taken to fight corruption decades ago.

"The amount of leakage and losses experienced by the country is also much different when compared to the past few years.

"Based on cumulative estimation of the GDP for five years between 2018 and 2023, the country lost RM277bil due to corruption," he said.

Azam said this in his speech during the launch of National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim at the Putrajaya



Cornering corruption: Anwar attending the launch of NACS at the PICC in Putrajaya. - AZLINA ABDULLAH/The Star

International Convention Centre (PICC) yesterday.

The MACC chief commissioner expressed disappointment over the massive leakage within the federal administration, adding that the money could have been used for various initiatives that could have benefit the public.

"This big number could've been used to help the public in

various aspects, especially on implementing social projects such as repairing schools and hospitals, but unfortunately this amount is now drained due to the crime of corruption.

"Therefore, to ensure the fight against corruption will work, the implementation of NACS will use approaches and methods that can identify which sectors are exposed

to corruption," he added.

When met by reporters later, Azam said it is important to ensure the country will not keep losing money to corruption.

"The RM277bil is based on the GDP. It's an estimation. So, if we divide that by five, on average, we are losing about RM55bil a year.

"This is the amount of money we need to save. We are not saying this from the perspective of generating income but rather on cost-saving because if we can save the money, we can distribute it to the public," he said.

According to the NACS booklet which was distributed during the launching event, the MACC said the RM277bil leakage could pose a profound detrimental impact on Malaysia.

"To put this figure into perspective, it equates to 28 years of Sumbangan Tunai Rahmah (STR) or nearly matches the combined GDP of Johor and Penang.

"The persistent leakages within ministries, government departments, government-linked companies and statutory bodies require urgent rectification," the booklet read.