

# MACC chief urges overhaul of outdated laws to combat corruption

By **Muhammad Yusri Muzamir** - February 16, 2024 @ 12:31am



Tan Sri Azam Baki says the agency is also examining outdated processes related to monopolistic company control in the country. - NSTP file pic

KUALA LUMPUR: Outdated provisions within several existing laws have been identified as among the factors that facilitate corruption practices, particularly among civil servants.

This was revealed by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) chief commissioner Tan Sri Azam Baki, who also said that a review of the relevant provisions is being conducted by the agency together with relevant parties.

Highlighting the example of direct negotiation procurement contracts, Azam said the value of RM50,000 for this purpose has not been reviewed since it was set in the 1990s, potentially leading many contractors to giving bribes to win tenders.

He said the set value for direct negotiation procurement contracts should be periodically reviewed to be adjusted according to the current rate, in line with currency value changes.

"Civil contractors only profit a maximum of 15 per cent of the contract value. Imagine if it's RM50,000 and they struggle to obtain the contract, they only profit RM7,500.

"What is RM7,500 if the project is carried out on a hill? Car prices and dowry costs have risen, nothing is low anymore. Therefore, we need to consider the current value (of currency).

"Small matters like this need to be looked at, to address issues of governance or management, procurement matters need to be corrected and improved from time to time," he said during a dialogue session titled 'Integrity: Assessing Transparency?', aired on the Sarawak government-owned television station tonight.

Azam said that the MACC is also examining outdated processes related to monopolistic company control in the country, besides informing that there are no laws capable of preventing and addressing the issue.

"Imagine they (monopolistic companies) are paid two or three percent, it's actually not illegal according to the law.

"Therefore, the MACC is intervening and investigating this matter, besides presenting areas that need to be looked at in improving governance.

"A culture of good governance cannot be established without improving the system and processes so that there is guidance for the people in this country," he said.

Meanwhile, Azam acknowledged concerns about the possibility of civil servants from the group of students at local higher education institutions (HEIs) between 1998 and 2003 being involved in corrupt practices.

He said this follows the results of integrity-related studies among students conducted by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) in 2003, which found that 30 percent of respondents were willing to engage in corruption if given the opportunity.

"The group of students from 1998 to 2003 are now in the job market and their integrity level in 2003 was concerning.

"In fact, in the MACC's records, most of the individuals investigated (for corruption-related cases) are from the group of students who held power in the relevant student groups," he said.