

'No party images on govt aid'

There must be respect for campaign rules and ethics set by EC, says PM

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JOHOR BARU: Party symbols should not be used when channeling government aid during campaigning for the upcoming two by-elections in Johor, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"The matter of distributing aid to the people with party symbols, which was done by the previous Perikatan Nasional government, is not allowed.

"Symbols of political parties cannot be used because all government aid is from the government," he said.

Anwar acknowledged that his unity government had also been involved in one or two such cases.

He added that he had raised the matter with Menteri Besar Datuk Onn Hafiz Ghazi on the need to respect the regulations and campaign ethics set by the Election Commission, especially with regard to the channelling of government aid during campaigning for the by-elections.

Today is nomination day for the by-elections for the Pulai parliamentary and Simpang Jeram state constituencies. Polling is on Sept 9.

Anwar, who is also Pakatan Harapan chairman, was speaking to reporters during a meet-the-people session in Pulai.

Also present were Onn Hafiz, Deputy Domestic Trade and Cost of Living Minister Fuziah Salleh, Amanah vice-president Senator Datuk Seri Mujahid Yusof Rawa,

and the Pakatan candidate named by Amanah to contest Pulai, Suhaizan Kaiat.

The Prime Minister also said corruption played a role in the increasing prices of goods and services, as well as projects intended for the people not being completed on time.

"It is because of corruption that the price of a bridge goes up from RM100mil to RM180mil.

"Government agencies concerned will continue to carry out investigations into those involved in corruption," he said.

On the prices of goods, Anwar said the government can intervene in some matters, but there are things beyond its control.

Giving the example of onions, he said the Indian government has raised the export duties on the

produce by 40%.

"We import a lot of onions and the price is expected to rise," he said, adding that the country spends a whopping RM70bil annually to import agriculture-related produce, including seeds.

"We have rainwater and fertile ground, but we still spend so much on imports," he said.

He added that agencies such as the Agriculture Department should play an active role in addressing the matter.

Anwar, during his one-day working visit to the state, also visited the Bangunan Sultan Iskandar Customs, Immigration and Quarantine complex here.

At the event in Pulai, Suhaizan, who was also the late Datuk Seri Salahuddin Ayub's political secretary, said he will continue his for-

mer boss' "Rahmah legacy".

The Pulai and Simpang Jeram seats fell vacant following the death of Salahuddin, the Amanah deputy president who was also the Domestic Trade and Cost of Living Minister, on July 23.

He was widely acknowledged as the father of the Rahmah initiative, which was introduced to help the rakyat, especially those in the B40 category, cope with the rising cost of living.

Earlier this year, the government allocated RM100mil for the Jualan Rahmah programme to be held in all 222 parliamentary constituencies nationwide.

On July 30, the Prime Minister announced an additional RM50mil to expand the Rahmah initiative nationwide.