

'Prices of chicken, cooking oil lower than before'

THE SUN 02 APR 2024

pg. 2

PUTRAJAYA: The current prices of essential items such as chicken, eggs and cooking oil are still low and stable compared with prices under the previous government, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said there are still those who criticise the *Madani* government as if it has not done anything to ease the people's cost of living.

"Don't forget that in 2021 and 2022 the price of chicken was RM13 (per kg), now it is much lower, at RM9 to RM9.50 per kg.

"The Opposition thinks we have forgotten. When they were in charge (administering the government), the price of five kilos of cooking oil was RM45 to RM50, now it is around RM27. For chicken eggs, to an extent, there were no eggs. Now, *Alhamdulillah*, (supply) is stable."

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said this in his address at

➤ Despite success, some still criticise *Madani* govt as if it has not done anything to ease people's burden, says Anwar

the monthly assembly with staff of the Prime Minister's Department yesterday.

On the involvement of Customs Department members in smuggling activities, Anwar said it is sad, especially since the department is under the Finance Ministry.

"People who underestimate the issue of corruption forget that in a small department, it can still cause a loss of almost RM2 billion to the country.

"Imagine if this happens with the leakage of diesel, cooking oil, and the amount taken by certain people. If we can collect everything, we can save billions of ringgit."

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) on March 29 revealed that the total leakage due to the activities of smuggling syndicates reached RM2 billion over the past three years.

MACC Chief Commissioner Tan Sri Azam Baki is reported to have said that 34 law enforcement officers, 27 individuals and company owners have been arrested through *Ops Samba 2.0* for protecting and facilitating the activities of smuggling syndicates.

Ops Samba 2.0 is an operation led by the MACC with the Inland Revenue Board and Bank Negara

Malaysia to combat the corrupt activities of enforcement agency officers who protect smuggling activities.

Anwar emphasised the importance of enforcement to curb government leakages and called on all parties to think of the best method to ensure that aid and subsidies are channelled to target groups, like that being done through the re-targeting of electricity subsidies, *Bernama* reported.

Regarding the *Sumbangan Asas Rahmah* initiative, he said the allocation had increased fivefold from RM130 million in 2023 to RM700 million this year, with the rate increased to RM1,200 compared with RM600 last year.

He added that the recipients had also increased to 700,000 poor and hardcore poor this year, compared with only 210,000 hardcore poor in 2023.

RM500 Aidilfitri aid for civil servants, RM250 for retirees

PUTRAJAYA: The government has agreed to give a special Aidilfitri financial aid of RM500 to civil servants on Grade 56 and below, including contract appointees, which will be paid on Friday, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said yesterday RM250 would be paid to government retirees, including pensionable and non-

pensionable veterans.

"*Insyah-Allah*, I have informed the Treasury for the special Aidilfitri financial assistance to be distributed beginning April 5," he said at the monthly assembly of the Prime Minister's Department here.

Anwar said the special assistance took into account the rising cost of living and schooling expenses, although the early incentive

payment of RM2,000 was distributed on Feb 23, *Bernama* reported.

He said the grievances of civil servants whom he met at Ramadan bazaars during his recent trips to Pahang and Sarawak were also taken into consideration.

Anwar said if politics remains stable, economic policies are clear, and domestic as well as foreign investments increase, the

government could consider providing other assistance.

Also present were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federal Territories) Dr Zaliha Mustafa, Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Zuki Ali and Public Service Department Director-General Datuk Seri Wan Ahmad Dahlan Abdul Aziz.