

PM WALKS THE TALK ON SETTling TAXES

Anwar shares how he paid RM500 in tax for import of olive oil, even though it is a gift

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday reminded the people on their responsibility to pay taxes, sharing his personal experience on olive oil that he bought for personal consumption. In his speech at the 42nd World Customs Day celebration here yesterday, he shared how he was taxed by the department for a

barrel of olive oil that he received from a friend in the Middle East.

“Every year, an old friend of mine from the Middle East will send me a *tong* (a barrel) of olive oil from a tree which he had planted around his house.

“This year, I was taxed RM500 by the Klang Customs Department although the olive oil is only for my own consumption and that of my family, and not for commercial purposes.

“Having said that, I refused to appeal (with the department over the tax payment). I want to set an example to all that if a prime minister has to pay his tax, other members of the public also need to fulfil their responsibility,” said Anwar, who is also finance minister.

“This is different from other people, who feel like they are above others after becoming the prime minister ... refuse to pay



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim presenting an award to former Customs director-general Datuk Seri Subromaniam Tholasy at the 42nd World Customs Day celebration in Putrajaya yesterday. With them are Finance Minister II Datuk Seri Amir Hamzah Azizan and Customs director-general Datuk Anis Rizana Mohd Zainudin@Mohd Zainuddin. **BERNAMA PIC**

taxes for purchasing items worth millions of ringgit.

“The olive oil is only for the consumption of myself and my family. However, I carried out my responsibility and paid the tax since I wanted to set a good example to the people,” he said.

Anwar also said he wanted all repair and upgrading works on the living quarters of security and enforcement agency personnel to begin this year.

Anwar said he wanted to not only improve the living conditions of enforcement officers, including those from the Customs Department and their families, but also to recognise their contributions for the safety and security of the nation.

Zainudin@Mohd Zainuddin.

Anwar gave an assurance that the upgrading and repair work would be carried out in line with good governance upheld by his Madani administration.

“It must follow the necessary process and must be according to tender (to avoid leakages of public funds).

“However, I believe that the tender process can be accelerated. Enduring a wait of six months to repair damaged houses and carry out repairs is a burden to members of the enforcement agencies and their families.

“That is why I am stressing the matter (to improve the welfare and livelihood of members of the Customs Department). This is also applicable to the police and armed forces,” he said.

Anwar also hinted at an increase in bonuses for Customs personnel, which he described as an important agency for the country’s economic growth and in upholding the safety and security of the nation.

“On behalf of myself, the ministry and the government, I am here to convey how proud we are of your performance.

“You have done a great service to the nation and I salute you (for your contribution).

“May Allah bless your efforts and us all by upholding the dignity and position of the country,” he said, adding that he was confident that the department could achieve and surpass its target of collecting RM56 billion in revenue last year.

“Members of the Armed Forces, the police, the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency and the Customs Department are working tirelessly, day and night, putting themselves in danger, exposing themselves to threats and all for the safety of our country.

“However, the treatment that these groups of people receive in terms of housing is *daiif* (poor).

“That is why I want it (repair and upgrading works) to start immediately and for it to be given priority this year,” said Anwar at the World Customs Day celebration here yesterday.

Present were Finance Minister II Datuk Seri Amir Hamzah Azizan and Customs director-general Datuk Anis Rizana Mohd