



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim visiting an exhibition booth after launching the 2024 National Security Month in Putrajaya yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

## BORDER SAFETY

# BOOST FOR NORTHERN SECURITY

Prime minister announces RM100 million more to upgrade entry points

NURADZIMMAH DAIM  
AND FATIN NURUL NAJIHAH  
PUTRAJAYA  
news@nst.com.my

**T**HE government is allocating an additional RM100 million to boost security at the northern border of the peninsula.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the funds would be used to upgrade entry points in Kelantan, Kedah and Perlis.

"I hope to meet with Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin in Sungai Golok and Rantau Panjang within the next four months to discuss border security and plan economic developments in the northern region of the peninsula and southern Thailand.

"We will also request the state government and the relevant local authorities to expedite the enhancement of facilities at the border," he said at the launch of the 2024 National Security Month.

Anwar said these efforts were focused on maintaining national security.

"A strong and resilient country is founded on the unity of its people and economic strength. However, a truly secure and stable country is one with high national security."

Anwar said the progress report on border security enhancements for Sabah and Sarawak, as well as the new Indonesian capital city of Nusantara, was expected to be presented tomorrow (Thursday).

In January last year, Anwar announced that the government had approved an allocation of RM1 billion for the commencement of work to upgrade the infrastructure and increase the capability of the CIQS complex at the Sarawak and Sabah borders.

In **Gua Musang**, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the additional allocation would enable border security agencies to procure more equipment.

With the additional allocation, he said, infrastructure development at the border could also be increased. In welcoming the decision, Zahid said this would benefit people living along the border with Thailand.

"This is a good effort by the government and will definitely benefit those who live near the northern border.

"The government has set up an agency (Malaysia Checkpoints and Border Agency or MCBA) which will comprise several de-

partments and agencies.

"We are confident that the new MCBA director-general will carry out his job well," he said after the ground-breaking of a road alignment project in Kuala Betis here.

The management and control of the nation's borders were placed under the MCBA a few months ago.

Anwar said then that MCBA had started operating on May 1 although the law governing the agency would only be tabled in Parliament later.

He said MCBA would coordinate and ensure that operations at the country's borders were smooth and secure.

Meanwhile, experts lauded the decision to allocate more funds, saying it was crucial to combat cross-border crimes and security threats.

Universiti Utara Malaysia international affairs and political analyst Professor Dr Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Sani said the move also served as a signal to foreign investors, demonstrating the government's commitment to bolstering national security and making the country a more attractive destination for investment.

"Numerous issues related to drug trafficking, human traffick-

ing and the smuggling of goods such as subsidised petrol can be effectively addressed.

"Malaysia must also show a serious commitment to tackling smuggling and trafficking issues to instil confidence in the country's security. This will further attract investors to Malaysia," he told the *New Straits Times*.

UUM national security analyst Dr Mohamad Faisol Keling said border security could be addressed by reassessing the "soft target concept".

"The government can designate areas and small towns along the border as soft targets. In fact, to regulate, the government already has agencies, facilities and manpower to carry out such tasks.

"This method is more economical and can increase effectiveness in ensuring national security."

Faisol said identifying specific threats could help to address border security challenges effectively.

"By focusing on specific groups, the government can increase law enforcement effectiveness while saving national expenditure," he said. **Additional reporting by Sharifah Mahsinah Abdullah and Ahmad Mukhsein Mukhtar**



Professor Dr Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Sani