



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim arriving to launch the 'Segalanya Felda' Carnival in Lahad Datu, Sabah, yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

'FREE AND INDEPENDENT COUNTRY'

'NO COUNTRY SHOULD TRY TO PRESSURE US'

We should maintain good relations with all countries, says Anwar

LAHAD DATU

MALAYSIA has the right to determine what is best for itself and its people, including how it establishes diplomatic ties with other countries, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday.

He said no party should try to pressure the country as Malaysia aimed to maintain good relations with all countries.

Anwar, who recently returned from a working visit to Russia, said his meeting with President Vladimir Putin was aimed at strengthening Kuala Lumpur's relationship with Moscow and encouraging Russia to increase its import of palm oil from Malaysia.

"On my meeting with President Putin, some people questioned why Malaysia would seek to im-

prove relations with Russia, and what America or Europe might think.

"We are a free and independent country. We decide what is best for our nation. We should maintain good relations with all countries, but no country should try to pressure us."

He said this while launching the 'Segalanya Felda' Carnival here.

He said India, China, Egypt, and the Netherlands were among the major importers of Malaysia's palm oil and that he was working to ensure these countries increased their imports of this commodity.

"We are asking Russia to increase its imports, which is why we are establishing relations with them.

"China has agreed to increase its import of palm oil.

"When I met Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he also said that India will increase palm oil imports (from Malaysia)."

He said his visits to these countries also aimed to boost trade and promote Malaysia's tourism sector and popular destinations such as Sabah, Sarawak, Langkawi and Penang, which were

deemed to be among the places with the most beautiful natural landscapes in the world.

"This is also to attract tourists from Russia, as Malaysia records only about 100,000 Russian tourist arrivals compared with Turkiye, which records between five million and 10 million tourist arrivals annually," he said.

He said he had been invited by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi to visit Egypt, which he saw as a chance to strengthen bilateral relations and also to persuade Egypt to increase its import of Malaysian palm oil.

"Insyah-Allah, I will go and convey greetings from Lahad Datu and Sabah to President El-Sisi.

"I will tell him that the people here grow oil palm and will ask him to buy more palm oil from us," he said to cheers from the crowd.

He said he planned to share the beauty of Lahad Datu and Sabah with El-Sisi.

Present at the carnival at Felda Sahabat here were state Finance Minister Datuk Seri Masidi Manjun representing Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor, and Felda chairman Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek. **Bernama**