

# PM: Get rid of the cartels now

## Decision to import seeds and fertilisers must be data-driven, says Anwar

**SERDANG:** Cartels in the country's agriculture sector must be ended without any delay, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said the outdated system of importing seeds through cartels and monopolies must end without delay, and future decisions must be data-driven while prioritising the welfare of farmers, fishermen and smallholders.

"To guarantee productivity, the entire ecosystem must be streamlined, especially with the involvement of the Agriculture and Food Security Ministry and other relevant ministries.

"Seeds and fertilisers can no

longer be controlled by cartels and monopolies like before.

"That's why it's essential to have a minister and a secretary-general who are firm in ensuring that the old cartel practices in fertiliser importation are completely eliminated," he said in his speech when officiating the Malaysia Agriculture, Horticulture and Agrotourism Exhibition (Maha) 2024 at the Malaysia Agro Exposition Park here yesterday.

Also present were Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Shamsul Azri Abu Bakar, Agriculture and Food Security Minister Mohamad Sabu and his deputy Datuk Arthur Joseph Kurup.

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said the food sector is a crucial pillar that the country must develop and focus on.

Therefore, it was important to create a holistic and sustainable ecosystem rather than rely solely on the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (Fama), he added.

"Fama is a cornerstone. Its performance has improved significantly. That's why I stress that the ecosystem must be functioning effectively. The Agriculture Ministry is a large and strategically important ministry for our country," he said, reported Bernama.

Anwar also expressed hope that government subsidies for farmers, fishermen and smallholders will provide substantial benefits.

"This is a task entrusted to Agriculture Ministry, and although progress was gradual in the first year, I am optimistic about the pace of improvement under Datuk Seri Mohamad Sabu's leadership as we enter the second year," he said.

Mohamad, in his speech, said the agrifood sector contributed 10.9% to the gross domestic product (GDP) in the first quarter of this year, indicating positive economic growth.

He said this contribution came from three subsectors: 3.1% from agriculture, 2.2% from manufacturing, and 5.6% from services.

Themed 'Menuai Harapan Membina Masa Hadapan' (Harvesting Hope, Building the Future), Maha, now in its 100th edition, aims to secure about RM6bil worth of memorandums of understanding and RM40mil in direct sales.