

Fight against graft and smuggling persists amid challenges

SERDANG: While decades-old cartels have been dismantled, the fight against corruption and smuggling is far from over, says the Prime Minister.

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim acknowledged that the sacrifices of enforcement agencies in tackling such illegal activities but said the challenges persist.

"Is it perfect yet? No. Have we managed to stop smuggling? No, there are still cases. That is why the true spirit of independence lies in our determination to liberate this country from all forms of fraud - corruption, smuggling and illegal activities.

"We must remain steadfast in freeing the rakyat by eliminating such activities," he said in his National Day address at the Malaysia Agro Exposition Park Serdang yesterday.

On the rising cost of living, he said the government remains deeply concerned, even though price hikes are also affecting other nations and were prevalent under previous administrations.

He also said issues such as healthcare and prices of essential goods, including chicken and eggs, are raised at every Cabinet meeting.

"Even a five-sen price increase

worries us, cfmougn we Know price hikes in other countries are more drastic," he said.

Anwar added that breaking cartels that manipulate market prices is one way the government is addressing the issue.

"But what we must recognise is that the Madani government has broken down the walls of cartels. I have instructed enforcement bodies to continue fighting cartels and those using illegal means to destroy the country.

"There will be no compromise," he stressed, citing the chicken cartel as an example of a decades-old monopoly that was final-

ly broken through political will and the sacrifices of enforcement officers.

Touching on global uncertainties arising from the United States' tariffs and tensions between Washington and Beijing, Anwar said Malaysia continues to uphold the principle of Asean centrality.

"We are on good terms with China and the United States. Two weeks ago, I received a phone call from US President Donald Trump.

"After the National Day parade, I will visit China at the invitation of President Xi Jinping," he said.

Looking ahead to the 47th

Asean Summit in October, Anwar said the event will be comparable to a global gathering, with leaders from the Asean countries, Europe, Canada, Latin America and Africa expected in Kuala Lumpur.

"As previously mentioned, President Trump has confirmed his visit to Malaysia, and I believe the Chinese leader and possibly the Russian leader may also attend," he said.

Anwar expressed confidence in their participation thanks to the effectiveness and dedication of all those working to make the Asean meetings among the largest and most well-organised.