

Combatting graft a priority



Hands-on approach: Anwar shaking hands with the rakyat at a meet-and-greet programme in Tulid, Sabah. — Photo from Anwar's Facebook page

PM highlights recent smuggling syndicate crackdowns

KOTA KINABALU: The government has always put combating corruption a top priority, particularly cases which caused billions of ringgit in losses to the nation, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said his administration has taken decisive action against cartels and smuggling syndicates in Port Klang, activities he claimed had persisted for decades without serious enforcement.

He said after being briefed on smuggling operations at the port, the government immediately launched an aggressive crackdown, resulting in the seizure of RM15.5bil and the prosecution of

several individuals.

"There was a big cartel smuggling goods out of Port Klang ... even drug-laden containers left Port Klang and were only intercepted in Australia.

"I said I could no longer tolerate this. We conducted raids, and the syndicate was powerful ... they had inside help, and issued death and intimidation threats.

"But I salute and commend the (enforcement) agencies because they now have the courage to take action, as we finally have the political will to do so," he said at a "Sembang Santai" breakfast programme with the Sabah media practitioners here yesterday.

Anwar said he waited for a year for reports of the matter to be presented, but none came despite the topic being the talk of the town.

In the end, he said investigations exposed the involvement of syndicates and politicians in the illicit operations, adding that people were also killed during these crimes.

On a separate issue, Anwar said there are no ideal coalitions that can work perfectly together, but there are ways to bring political stability while making the country stronger.

He said as a coalition that is against corruption and abuse of

any sort in the administration, Pakatan Harapan will draw the line when a leader, who is a member of the unity government, is found guilty in court for corruption.

He said it is not a matter of perception that has to be taken into account, but proof of corruption.

He was asked on Pakatan's willingness to work with parties and leaders that are implicated in corrupt practices, when Pakatan itself is a strong advocate against corruption.

"If there are charges, then that is where we draw the line," he said, stressing that proof and perception were different matters.