

**PKR pledges to reverse shipping policy to lower prices in east Malaysia**  
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**By Clara Chooi**

PETALING JAYA, Aug 2 — PKR today pledged today to abolish the policy of cabotage that requires goods to be shipped domestically with only local vessels, in a bid to make cars and other products cheaper in Sabah and Sarawak.

The national cabotage policy is highly controversial and has been blamed for higher prices in east Malaysia.

PKR's latest move appears to be part of Pakatan Rakyat's push to win crucial votes in the two east Malaysian states that have long been considered safe states for Barisan Nasional.

PKR de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim (picture) told a press conference here that the policy, introduced in the 1980s, makes "no economic sense" and should be revoked completely.

"Why must we, say, take goods from Hong Kong, for example, why must it come via Port Klang? I mean it is totally unacceptable.

"It does not even make economic sense, except for the cronies interested... so you are actually just enriching the few at the expense of the masses in Sabah and Sarawak," he said.

He noted that with Pakatan Rakyat's (PR) proposal to reduce the prices of cars by slashing excise duties and reviewing the Approved Permits (AP) system, this would in turn ensure that even those in Sabah and Sarawak would enjoy cheaper automotive rates.

Politicians and folk in Sabah and Sarawak have long been railing against the cabotage policy, arguing that it should be done away with to help normalise the economic divide between east Malaysia and the peninsula.

The 1980s policy requires all domestic transshipment of goods to be done using Malaysian vessels, which has contributed much to rising shipment costs and subsequently the higher cost of goods in east Malaysia.

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