

It starts with leadership

THE *New Straits Times* should be applauded for its painstaking investigations into how enforcement officers, who are based at border checkpoints, are on the take and allowing contraband goods and fuel to enter and leave the country.

Millions of taxpayers' money used to subsidise essential goods and fuel are being siphoned off by smugglers and this is a loss of government revenue

One cannot imagine the damage that drugs and firearms can do. It can compromise the nation's security if left unchecked. It's dangerous if enforcement officers turn a blind eye after getting their palms greased.

The rot starts from the top. If enforcement heads are clean and lead exemplary lives, their subordinates will follow suit. Leadership by example should be the core value of government servants who deal with the public.

Thus, it is important that enforcement agencies, like the Customs Department, Road Transport Department and General Operations Force, are headed by people of integrity and that those based at border checkpoints should be steadfast in doing their work and not give in to greed.

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission with limited resources

cannot be tasked to nip corruption at the border points on its own.

The heads of the various ministries should play their part in imparting good moral and religious values among their staff to prevent them from indulging in illegal activities.

Hamdan Ibrahim, Kuala Lumpur

Fear might be behind it

SYABAS to the *New Straits Times* for highlighting the extent of smuggling in the country. Being a Kelantanese, it is easy to see how visible this illegal activity has been.

The widespread sale of Thai rice in its original packaging in the local market is another visible evidence of smuggling.

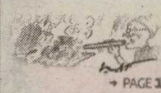
Visiting the other side of the border, one can see Malaysian subsidised items, such as sugar, cooking oil and flour, being sold openly in the market.

The reactions to your expose is normal. These include denials and statements such as "we have taken action" or "we have limited staff".

I am glad that the government

NEW STRAITS TIMES

ESTABLISHED 1845



MORE PARENTS WANT CHILDREN TO JOIN NATIONAL SERVICE

PRIME PAGE 10

OUTFLOW

Indonesians here sent home RM6.7b last year

PRIME PAGE 6

Brazen smuggling at the borders

EXCLUSIVE

LOST SUBSIDIES:

Weaknesses in screening term are costing

Leaders echo statement that Anwar is irrelevant

KUALA LUMPUR Several political leaders yesterday agreed that Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

The *NST* report on Jan 2.

has taken positive action to curb this threat to our economy, national security and social fabric.

We must appreciate the services of many of our men in uniform doing their duties diligently.

However, it cannot be denied that there are a few black sheep who negate the efforts of their responsible counterparts.

As the government intensifies its efforts to curb smuggling, I hope it also seeks to understand the difficult circumstances our men in uniform face while on duty at the border.

One must understand the fear factor and the consequences of be-

ing seen to be strict, especially when smuggling involves ruthless syndicates.

Apart from personal safety, there is also fear for the safety of their families.

There are many cases of officers and their families being hurt and threatened when they were identified as being strict.

Again, syabas to the *NST*, and the government for a firm response and it is hoped that an integrated response will also consider the plight of our men in uniform and their families.

B.H.T, Kota Baru, Kelantan