

## ENFORCEMENT OF TARGETED SUBSIDIES

# TOMORROW, IF POSSIBLE, SAYS PM

**Prime minister says targeted subsidies must benefit the people who need it, not the rich**

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**I**F Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had his way, targeted subsidies would start benefitting the people today.

The prime minister, however, admitted that the matter was a complex one

"If the plans (are ready), then tomorrow (today). I do not want to give any commitment but we are working on it. We want to do it as fast as possible," he said after visiting Pusat Penjaja Madani along Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman here.

Anwar said he and his team

were working on the subsidy mechanism but they are not convinced of its effectiveness yet as it is a complex matter.

"It is unlike electricity, where you know where the house and factories are.

"But for diesel, it is difficult as it is passable between vehicles.

"All these are being studied. The mechanism is not easy but we are working on it," he said.

Anwar added that targeted subsidies must benefit the people who need it rather than the rich.

"The 90 per cent of people who qualify should get it, like diesel. Now petrol, those driving Mercedes and Rolls Royce all get it," he said.

It was reported that individuals earning more than the average salary or those who fall under the Top 20 income group (T20) would no longer receive subsidies for electricity and to perform the haj.

Anwar, during the question and answer session in the first



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim engaging with hawkers and petty traders during the Program Temu Mesra Perdana Menteri at Pusat Penjaja Madani in Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, Kuala Lumpur, yesterday. PIC BY ASWADI ALIAS

meeting of Dewan Rakyat in May, had said that the government would coordinate subsidy distribution based on income groups through the implementation of a household socioeconomic database, Pangkalan Data Utama (Padu), which is expected to be completed by year-end.

"To curb leakages, the government will initiate targeted electricity subsidy in the first half of this year to maintain the tariff for households, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and agricultural producers.

"Hence, we will not increase the electricity tariff, except for the T20, and this will be coordinated by the Padu system," he added.

Meanwhile, in a Facebook posting after visiting the centre, Anwar said, in the race to build mega buildings and landmarks,

hawkers and traders should not be left behind.

"Do not push them aside. They, too, want a comfortable place and facilities for them and their visitors.

"The Kuala Lumpur City Hall is conducting maintenance works at all its 68 hawker centres," he said.

He said the move to upgrade petty trader and hawker stalls was a cooperation between the Federal Territories Department and City Hall.

Anwar, who also visited the nearby Jalan Raja Bot wet market, said several hawker centres would be spruced up this year.

"I have also discussed with the mayor about revoking the business licence of those who pass it on to others."

This, said Anwar, also included those who passed their licences

to foreigners.

He said the government and City Hall were now looking into methods to ensure that regulations were complied with for the benefit of local traders and hawkers.

"Along with the City Hall mayor and its directors, I have plans on how to ensure (petty traders and hawkers) abide by regulations and for licences to be issued to (only) locals.

"If they (petty traders and hawkers) hand over the licences to others, we will revoke them," he said.

Also present was Kuala Lumpur Mayor Datuk Kamarulzaman Mat Salleh.

On Wednesday, Economy Minister Rafizi Ramli had said that the B40, M40 and T20 classifications would be slowly phased out next year.