



Anwar being greeted by students at an event yesterday at the Universiti Malaysia campus in Bachok, Kelantan. - **BERNAMAPIC**

'Focus on plugging leaks in subsidised goods'

> Civil servants should also help explain government policies involving taxes and subsidies to the people, says PM

KOTA BHARU: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has called on civil servants, especially those in enforcement agencies, to focus on addressing issues of leakages involving subsidised goods.

He said subsidies should be enjoyed by the poor but, sadly, most have been misused, Bernama reported.

"This country is prosperous, but there are far too many 'leaks'. Subsidies meant for the poor have been stolen. Cooking oil, diesel subsidies have been arrogated. So, when will these subsidies ever be enough?

"That's why enforcement agencies should pay more attention to checking leakages in the system," he said at a special address to Kelantan civil servants at Balai Islam Lundang

here yesterday.

Also present at the event were Menteri Besar Datuk Ahmad Yakob, Public Service Department director-general Datuk Dr Zulkapli Mohamed, Prime Minister's Department Implementation Coordination Unit director-general Datuk Seri Wan Ahmad Dahlan Abdul Aziz and Kelantan state secretary Datuk Nazran Muhammad.

Citing electricity subsidy as an example, Anwar said it should be enjoyed by ordinary citizens, but at present even high-income earners are receiving the subsidy.

"How much is the subsidy for electricity? If left uncontrolled this year it could reach RM30 billion. If this is how much we spend on the electricity subsidy, how can we afford to build

new schools and universities?"

Anwar added that he is against the decision to abolish part of the electricity subsidy and increase the electricity rate because the people are struggling and this would be an additional burden on them.

"So, what choice do we have? We increased the rates for high income earners, while the rest of the people are not affected."

As such, Anwar called on civil servants to help explain the policies that have been implemented by the government involving taxes and subsidies to the people.

"At times it is difficult to understand these policies because they are not fully explained, and civil servants, as the voice of the government that sees to policy implementation, should know that I do not intend to raise taxes that affect people in the low-income group.

"But, I am forced to raise the taxes on the rich, be it for electricity, water, haj travel, diesel or petrol."