



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim officially closing the Convention on Islamic Affairs Management in Kota Kinabalu yesterday. Flanking him are Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor (second from left) and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs) Datuk Dr Mohd Na'im Mokhtar.

PIC BY MOHD ADAM ARININ

RATIONALISATION NEEDED

RM81b ON SUBSIDIES THIS YEAR, SAYS PM

But reducing them without considering people's needs should be avoided, says Anwar

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THE government is expected to spend more than RM81 billion in subsidies, including for electricity, fuel and food, this year, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

However, Anwar said, even though that was a large sum, reducing subsidies without looking at the needs of the people should be avoided.

He said the government must ensure that people were not burdened, especially considering the rising cost of living.

This, he added, was why the rationalisation of subsidies was important so a balance could be struck to ensure government spending was reduced but people were still helped.

Anwar said subsidy rationalisation would also ensure that the economy remained strong.

"Subsidies are an intervention by the government to ease the people's burden.

"Subsidies for chicken and eggs amounted to RM3.8 billion, but reducing these subsidies is not an option as it will raise the cost of living.

"So a more resilient policy is needed to reduce (subsidies), which is the rationalisation of subsidies.

"With such a huge amount of subsidies, no country can survive, so some (subsidies) will have to be reduced."

He said this at the closing ceremony of the Convention on Islamic Affairs Management at the Sabah International Convention Centre here.

Present were Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs) Datuk Dr Mohd Na'im Mokhtar and state ministers.

Meanwhile, Anwar said the government would ensure that the price of imported white rice in the interior of Sabah and Sarawak was not too high.

He said the government had agreed to subsidise the 10kg bag of imported white rice in both states, reducing its price from RM45 to RM31.

However, Anwar said, the price for this rice in the interior would be higher due to logistical costs.

"We will discuss with the state governments about reducing the cost in the interior."

To ensure an adequate supply of local rice in Peninsular Malay-

sia, he said imported white rice would be distributed to army bases, police, boarding schools, hospitals and offices.

Bernamea reported that Anwar said Islamic affairs agencies and religious figures should provide input on national policies, such as the 12th Malaysia Plan (12MP) and the budget.

This, he said, was so the concept of Malaysia Madani could be applied for more sustainable development of the country and its people.

He said the parties involved needed to provide input as a whole on the policy, not only focusing on the field of Islam but also on other areas that needed it.

"I have relayed this to Jakim (Islamic Development Department) officials to cooperate because the approach used in the past was different.

"When I conducted the Mid-term Review of the 12MP, I sent the draft to the director-general of Jakim and asked her for input, not on religious-related initiatives (but) on the 12MP (as a whole)."

He said the input was important so that he could present the 12MP as a view from Islamic experts, so that the spirit of Madani could be applied.

He added that Malaysia Madani was also an important "perencah" (seasoning) in the 2024 Budget, which will be tabled on Oct 13.