

Improvising Budget 2024

New measures to be in place to fully benefit the people, says Anwar

By MAZWIN NIK ANIS
mazwin@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: Improvements will be made to Budget 2024, taking into consideration responses and feedback received following its tabling last week, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said new measures will be put in place to ensure the people will fully benefit from it.

The Budget, he said, was drafted during "difficult economic times" when the country was facing a deficit and debts.

"To give more goodies is not viable as there are financial constraints. If we are overly bound by our financial limitations, the people will suffer," he said in relating his experience in drawing up Budget 2024.

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, tabled the Budget last Friday.

Speaking at the Prime Minister's Department's monthly assembly, he said that despite financial limitations and high costs, the government continued to focus on health, education and public infrastructure.

"We can achieve the targets we have set with the help of civil



Feedback welcomed: Anwar (centre) delivering his speech at the Prime Minister's Department's monthly assembly at Puspanitapuri in Putrajaya. — Bernama

servants who are implementers of our policies. If it is done right, the policies can be successful," he said.

He pointed to the issue of public toilets, where problems affecting 8,000 public restrooms were settled within six months of his administration.

On another matter, the Prime Minister said the private sector,

especially companies which have recorded substantive profit, should consider raising their employees' wages to match productivity and performance.

He noted that a study by the Statistics Department indicated that productivity registered "good numbers" but the rise in wages was "very moderate".

"I hope with the announcement

of the interim payment for civil servants, the private sector too, will look at payments and wages for their staff," he added.

Under Budget 2024, civil servants Grade 56 and below are to receive an interim payment of RM2,000 while the government reviews the salary and allowance scheme.

Those in the Jawatan Utama Sektor Awam (Jusa or Public Sector Superscale) level, as well as all retirees from the civil service will receive RM1,000.

On the review of civil servants' salary and allowance scheme, Anwar said it is targeted to be ready by the middle of next year so that important announcements can be made in the next budget.

He added that the government felt that it is justified as the scheme has not been reviewed for the past 10 years.

"I have told the Public Service director-general that the review must be comprehensive and that all departments and sectors be given the opportunity to state their case," he said.

In July, Anwar had said he would personally look into the salary and allowance scheme of civil servants.