

Solutions to address shortcomings

Govt ready to fix targeted diesel subsidy issues

By **MANJIT KAUR**
manjit@thestar.com.my

BAGAN SERAI: Any weaknesses in the implementation of the targeted diesel subsidy will be improved to ensure those eligible are not affected, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister acknowledged that the rollout of the targeted diesel subsidy may encounter some shortcomings but the government stands prepared to address any issues.

"Among those affected are padi farmers, fishermen and school bus operators, and if they don't receive the subsidy, they will be assisted," Anwar said at the launch of the masterplan for the Kerian Integrated Green Industrial Park project here yesterday.

He said the subsidy is for the underprivileged, including those reliant on diesel for transportation and livelihoods.

"If they use diesel for school buses, for example, we will give them time to appeal for the subsidy," he added.

Anwar said the targeted subsidy should not be controversial as all prime ministers before him had agreed that there were many loopholes.

He pointed out bipartisan support for the move, saying that he found it strange that it was becoming a political issue.

Comparing the subsidy to past adjustments in utility tariffs, Anwar noted that unlike the water tariff increase involving all states, the diesel subsidy decision falls under federal jurisdiction.

"On the other hand, the targeted diesel subsidy is an issue because it is a decision of the Federal Government.

"Previously, with the increase in electricity tariffs, we withdrew subsidies from the super-rich and foreigners, and we were able to save RM4.5bil.

"Most people were not affected. If anyone is affected they can appeal and we will consider it," he said.

Anwar said therefore, it was not right to say that the action was cruel.

"Otherwise, year after year, there will be no courage to implement a policy and the govern-



Sustainable future: Anwar officiating at the launch of the masterplan for the Kerian Integrated Green Industrial Park project at Dewan Zainal Abidin Zin in Bagan Serai, Perak. Looking on are (from right to left) Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof and (second left) Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Saarani Mohamad. — Bernama

"If those affected don't receive the subsidy, they will be assisted."

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

ment will continue to incur losses," he said.

Meanwhile, Communications Minister Fahmi Fadzil said Anwar will announce some good news regarding food items today.

Fahmi said the announcement

was the result of good cooperation and understanding between the government and the industrial sector to assist the people.

"We await the Prime Minister's announcement. It concerns some common food items that we consume daily, so there is good news from the Prime Minister," he told the media at the opening of Mydin Mart Pantai Dalam yesterday.

"It demonstrates that with strong collaboration between the industrial sector and the government, and a shared commitment to serving the public, we can make significant announcements like the one the Prime Minister will deliver," he said after the event, where he also distributed Aidiladha contributions to residents of Lembah Pantai, his par-

liamentary constituency.

When asked if the announcement pertains to rice, Fahmi urged everyone to be patient and to just wait for the special announcement from the Prime Minister.

It is understood that the Domestic Trade and Cost of Living Ministry would compare prices and obtain goods at lower prices to benefit the public.

Fahmi also said efforts have also been initiated to promote local products as the preferred choice to support the public.

He highlighted that these initiatives can assist local products, particularly those from small and medium enterprises, which are guaranteed to be of good quality and affordable.