

# Ending subsidy abuse by foreigners

## PM: Diesel price reform needed to save nation from financial drain

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**BUKIT MERTAJAM:** The rise in fares by Singapore tour agencies has shown their long-standing reliance on Malaysian diesel subsidies, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said the diesel subsidy rationalisation was needed to save the country in preventing financial drain from misuse.

"Tour buses and travel companies from Singapore raised prices because they said they could not get diesel subsidies.

"This meant that they had been benefiting from our diesel

subsidies for decades. Not only them, there were foreign fishermen and others at the country's borders making use of our subsidies.

"Plenty of funds were leaking over the years," he said during the Aidiladha Korban Perdana sacrificial ceremony at Masjid Jamek Cherok Tokun Bawah here yesterday.

The subsidies, said Anwar, were benefiting 3.8 million foreigners.

"It (diesel) was taken out to Thailand and used by Thai fishing boats.

"This is Malaysian taxpayers' money but foreigners were reaping the benefits.

"The number of cars produced from 2012 to 2020 was small compared to the skyrocketing increase in diesel consumption because the fuel was enjoyed by foreigners," he said.

Anwar also said there were bound to be teething problems in any subsidy rationalisation when first rolled out.

"If there are weaknesses, inform us and we will correct them. Those who have concerns or issues with it, let us know so that we can improve.

"When we start something, there will be flaws. Tell us so we can correct it rather than saying cruel things (about it)," he said.

Anwar, who is also the Finance

Minister, acknowledged that the move did affect the people but assured the Madani government would do its best to continue to provide subsidies to those deserving.

He said detractors had been attacking the government for implementing the diesel rationalisation instead of giving constructive criticisms.

"These subsidies are for the poor, the deserving. Those who deserve to get subsidies can apply for them.

"Those who use diesel, like fishermen, farmers, public transport operators, all of them can apply for subsidies.

"My duty is to safeguard the

interests of the M40 and B40, so subsidies are for them only," he added.

Later, when approached by the press, Anwar noted that the move affected companies bordering Malaysia which had illegally benefited from the diesel subsidies over the years.

"It will save us funds that have been misused by others.

"The savings from the diesel subsidy rationalisation would be returned to the people," he reiterated.

On Monday, the Prime Minister said the government was still bearing around RM7bil in subsidies related to diesel in Peninsular Malaysia.