

Foreign media reports on fuel subsidy cuts unethical: PM

BUTTERWORTH: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim described foreign media reports on fuel subsidy cuts as unethical and said no final decision was made at the Cabinet level on the matter.

"I found recently, maybe because of our firm political stance, neighbouring and international media continue to attack with negative news, for example the casino development issue (in Johor). It was never discussed, but it became a hot issue.

"Then the issue of withdrawing diesel subsidy. Although there was initial discussion, there was no final decision regarding the implementation date. The method needs to be explained. The principle is that it should not burden the people," he said after attending the prime minister's meeting with community leaders at a hotel yesterday.

He criticised foreign media reports for quoting information from unreliable sources.

> We accept principle of freedom of media but there should be ethics, based on facts, with information cited from reliable sources, says Anwar

"We accept the principle of freedom (of the media) but there should be ethics, based on facts. Information cited needs to be from reliable sources. This is a matter of policy that requires the government to give notice and make an announcement."

Communications Minister Fahmi Fadzil also dismissed foreign media reports suggesting that the government had decided to announce a price hike for petrol and diesel.

"The matter has not been discussed by the Cabinet, including during last week's meeting.

"I have studied the matter

carefully and can confirm here that it was not discussed because I am also a Cabinet minister. Therefore, don't put the cart before the horse or don't announce before it has been announced.

"We are aware that several foreign based media have pre-empted the process and I hope all parties, including the media, can obtain information from credible sources," he said in his speech at the *Jiwa Madani* programme at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama (P) Al-Mashoor on Saturday.

He also reminded all media not to publish reports based on sources

that have not been verified or identified, Bernama reported.

"We saw recently that Digital Minister (Gobind Singh Deo), who was in Penang in April, speak of the Digital Nasional Bhd. A week before that, there were foreign media reports that claimed the implementation of the 5G network was down and out. It was as if everything had been decided.

"Secondly, the issue of casino licence (in Johor) claiming it will be announced soon."

Yesterday a foreign news newspaper reported that Malaysia planned to cut fuel subsidies as part of economic reform measures.

The report cited industry and government sources who claimed that diesel prices would be floated according to market prices in the weeks following the Kuala Kubu Baharu by election on May 11.

It also claimed that the move would be followed by a gradual increase in the retail price of petrol.