

PM defends subsidy changes, rejects 'Robin Hood' label

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has dismissed comparisons to “Robin Hood” in his plans to implement subsidy rationalisation involving the T15 high income group, stating that he is simply acting fairly in assisting the lower income groups.

“If we want to support the impoverished, we must have sufficient resources. We inherited a debt of RM1.5 trillion, and we do not wish to tax the public. We are only taxing the ultra-wealthy a little (more).

“That is not being Robin Hood;

it is simply withdrawing subsidies,” the Prime Minister said.

Robin Hood is a character in English folklore known for stealing from the rich and giving to the poor.

During the tabling of Budget 2025, the government announced the retargeting of RON95 fuel subsidies, which will take effect in the middle of next year.

Various parties have since called on the government to explain what constitutes the T15 high-income group and to re-define the group to include only

those earning above RM30,000 a month.

At a dialogue at Universiti Pertahanan Malaysia yesterday, Anwar said Malaysia is among the nations providing the highest subsidies and has one of the lowest tax systems in the world.

“Imagine some of the wealthiest people in this country who, under previous policies, received electricity subsidies from the government.

“Now, the government simply wants them to pay the cost price, which I believe is fair.

“If there are parties who want to politicise this as unfair or unreasonable, it is because the matter involves their businesses,” he said.

On international relations, Anwar emphasised the importance of maintaining diplomatic ties with all parties for the country’s benefit.

“My friends advised me not to be too harsh in criticising the occupation of Palestine because it could hurt investment from the United States.

“But I maintain my relationship

with them. When I met US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Laos recently, we spoke about investment, Gaza and Lebanon,” he said.

Anwar also said that there are suggestions from his counterparts to sever ties with Russia, China and the United States.

“I told them that it is their problem if they have conflicts with each other, but do not involve us.

“We are a sovereign and independent country. We make decisions for the betterment of the country and citizens,” he added.