

PM hints budget will stop rich from taking advantage

PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has hinted that the 2025 Budget will continue to assist the poor and stop the rich from taking advantage of heavily subsidised educational opportunities.

He said yesterday that there must be a stop to “leakages” involving wealthy people abusing education opportunities that should go to students from underprivileged backgrounds.

He gave an example of a wealthy person’s child attending SM Sains, which is a government school that gives opportunities to children from poor backgrounds.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said the government could tackle any shortfalls in support-

ing the poor if such subsidies were no longer channelled to the wealthy.

“This is just an early hint before the budget announcement next month (Oct 18). If we truly want to be fair, it must be fair to those in need, including vulnerable groups.

“Autistic children also need to be given attention. If not, where is the compassion in this Madani economy? And I know that some of these actions may not be popular,” he said at the National Symposium to End Poverty here.

Present were Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Shamsul Azri Abu Bakar, Economy Minister Rafizi Ramli, Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Johari Abdul,

Bandar Tun Razak member of parliament Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and Public Service Department (PSD) director-general Datuk Seri Wan Ahmad Dahlan Abdul Aziz.

Anwar asked how many children from elite families attended science schools or institutes that were actually intended for the underprivileged.

“They (these institutes) are benefiting families of top civil servants, politicians and elite businessmen. Their children are all sent to the best schools that are heavily funded by the government, which is very unfair.

“If a wealthy child is sent to an engineering faculty, (regardless of whether they are) Malay, Chi-

nese or Iban, (if they are rich) they should pay... that way, we can cover any shortfall.”

Anwar said it was important to ensure that subsidies were given to the poor so that they could improve their lives.

He cited an example of his recent visit to Kapit, Sarawak, which was a rural area with a high poverty rate.

“If this country truly values independence, freedom, and justice, then that should be our focus.

“The secondary schools there (in Kapit) may not be on a par (with other schools), but there must at least be ongoing efforts to improve facilities, capabilities and quality,” he said.