

PM: MPs DON'T SERVE TAUKE

Lawmakers must be the voice of the people, says Anwar

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MEMBERS of parliament must serve as the voice of the people, not *tauke* (tycoons), especially on matters of public interest, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Citing the targeted diesel subsidy programme as an example,

Anwar, who is finance minister, said the initiative does not burden the public, just like the recent electricity tariff hike, which applies only to companies.

"MPs must be spokespersons for the people, not for tauke. The rising electricity rates are for companies.

"If Felda is affected, we will try to help," he said during Prime Minister's Question Time in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

On claims by opposition MPs

that electricity bills had increased, Anwar said that only the tariffs had gone up, while the actual total bills were lower.

"If some people paid more, I don't understand why, because on average, there has been an eight to 14 per cent decrease.

"Electricity prices are going down, fuel prices are also going down."

He took aim at the opposition's "double standards" for not raising the issue of water tariff hikes in four opposition-led states, even though the increases affected people across the board.

He said the federal government did not object to requests from

the Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu governments to raise water tariffs as they were facing challenges, such as debt arrears.

"The state governments wrote to the minister seeking approval and the federal government did not oppose the proposals.

"Because it was a state government decision, there was no issue. But imagine if it had been done at the federal level.

"We would have been cursed and condemned.

"As someone responsible, I didn't oppose the increase if it was necessary, just like with subsidy rationalisation. But why the double standard?"