

## FESTIVE SEASONS

# 'TARGETED TOLL EXEMPTION UNDER REVIEW

**This should benefit only B40, M40 groups, says prime minister**

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**D**ATUK Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the government is working on a more targeted approach for the provision of toll exemptions during festive seasons.

The prime minister said, similar to previous subsidy adjustments, toll exemptions should be provided only to the B40 and M40 groups.

"Some have raised the issue of why toll exemption is for everyone, (as) even (those driving) cars such as Rolls Royce, Mercedes and Maserati benefit (from it), so perhaps we should be more thorough to ensure that the lower-income groups are given special consideration.

"This is being refined. (Works) Minister Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi has outlined only the basic principles, stating that we

cannot continue to subsidise everything like electricity and fuel," Bernama reported him as saying.

Anwar said this at a press conference following his working visit to the World Economic Forum 2025 Annual Meeting here.

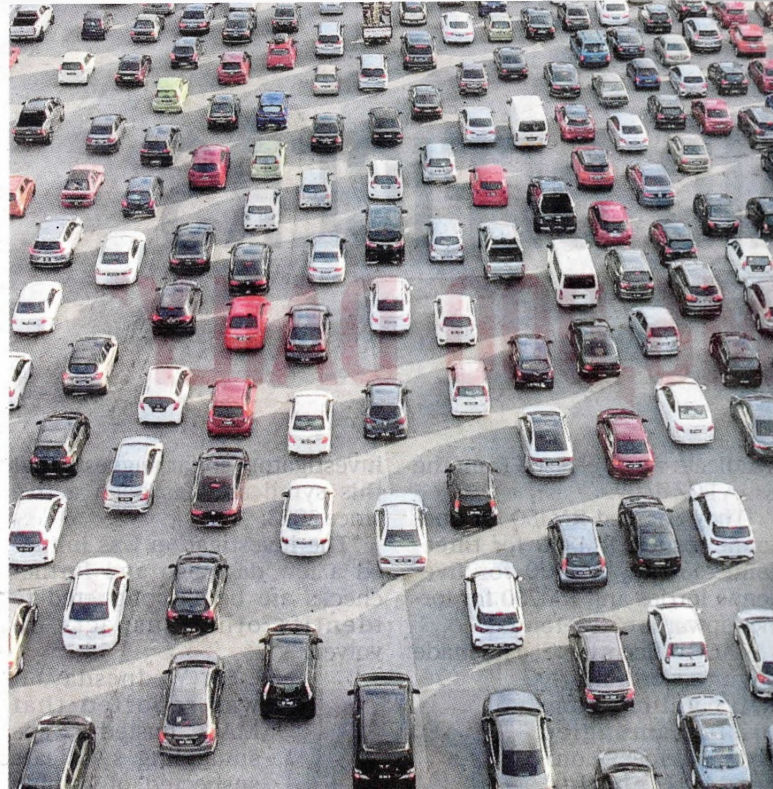
On Tuesday, Nanta reportedly said that 2024 would be the final year for the provision of toll exemptions during festive seasons, and the cabinet decided last year to seek a more targeted approach, which will be announced soon.

Anwar's announcement drew a thumbs up from economists who said having targeted subsidies was the path to take.

Putra Business School economic analyst Associate Professor Dr Ahmed Razman Abdul Latiff said the initiative helped the government cut expenses while ensuring subsidies were allocated to their target groups effectively.

"This would be a good move because the government can save the cost and ensure that the subsidised toll will only reach the targeted groups such as B40 and M40," he said.

Weighing in on whether toll exemptions during festive seasons could help low- and middle-income groups, Razman said such a move would still have a positive impact on them.



*Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim says the government is working on a more targeted approach for toll exemptions during festive seasons. NSTP FILE PIC*

“Since it will be on a seasonal basis, the benefit is quite minimal but still meaningful to these groups as every little help matters to them.”

Razman added that the government could use databases from the Sumbangan Tunai Rahmah (STR) and Central Database Hub (Padu) as mechanisms to disburse toll exemptions.

“The easiest would be to transfer money into their e-wallets, regardless of whether they are going to use the tolls or not. The allocation will be based on the STR and Padu data.

“The government can issue a flat amount (given to those eligible for toll exemption) depending on their household income and the type of vehicle they have,” he said.

Universiti Kuala Lumpur’s Business School economic analyst As-

sociate Professor Aimi Zulhazmi said if the government decided not to continue the toll exemption practice, targeted cash grants should be disbursed instead.

“This is more effective as, for example, each household can receive petrol expenditure aid during festive seasons.”

He said the provision of free tolls for every festival in the past was akin to purchasing bulk subsidies for all parties, regardless of income groups, as well as foreigners living in the country.

“Public transport providers also didn’t provide any discount to customers even though they also benefited from free tolls during festive seasons.

“The benefits of free tolls have also been enjoyed by foreigners and permanent residents in Malaysia, hence this also needs to be relooked.”