

'NOT AN INSIGNIFICANT SUM'

PM: RM100 AID MEANS A LOT TO THE POOR

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It's a supplementary measure to existing initiatives for the people, says Anwar

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THE government's latest RM100 Sumbangan Asas Rahmah (SARA) cash aid is part of a broader initiative to ease the financial burden on the people, said Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, rebuking critics who downplayed this aid.

The prime minister said the cash aid was a supplementary measure to the existing benefits enjoyed by the people.

"These are supplementary measures. It's as though some opposition MPs (members of parliaments) think it's merely RM100. Did they not read the full details?"

He said while the amount might seem small to high-income earners, it meant a lot to the low-income groups.

"If a low-income household has two children over the age of 18 and both parents are eligible, they could receive up to RM700 when combined with the existing Sumbangan Tunai Rahmah (STR) and SARA benefits.

"That is not an insignificant sum. Naturally, for a single person, the amount will be lower.

"I have no issue with criticism, but don't belittle this by saying it's 'just RM100' and questioning what it can buy.

"This is the maximum we can allocate on top of existing provisions," he said during the Finance Ministry's monthly assembly.

Anwar said the allocation for cash aid and related initiatives had risen from RM13 billion to RM15 billion this year, covering both STR and SARA assistance.

"All these are additions to what has already been implemented.

"Likewise, the reduction in fuel prices had to be introduced, even though I had already explained the rationale at the time."

He also defended the government's decision to remove fuel subsidy for foreigners, saying the move was justified as prices in countries such as Singapore,



Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

Thailand and Indonesia were significantly higher.

"This is not about imposing additional taxes or taking away anyone's rights. This is a subsidy — and the 50 sen per litre subsidy will no longer apply to foreigners. Yet even that drew criticism."

He also said the measures announced on Wednesday were meant to benefit the Middle 40 (M40) group.

"This is because the group that most frequently uses vehicles like cars and travels on tolled highways comprises the M40," he said, adding that confusion over government assistance often stemmed from shortcomings in communication and delivery.

"That is why I've said before that, at times, our communication — especially in explaining these initiatives — needs to be more effective.

"For instance, RON95 now stands at RM1.99 per litre, alongside other measures targeted at the M40. If we look at toll charges, most Bottom 40 individuals likely use motorcycles, which consume less fuel.

"The M40, on the other hand, largely drive cars, meaning their fuel consumption is higher."