

# 'Factual criticism on tax welcome'

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## Anwar says feedback should be conveyed without slander and verbal abuse

**PUTRAJAYA:** In the name of transparency, the government is ready to accept criticisms of the taxation system, but concerns must be based on facts, says the Prime Minister.

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said criticisms should be conveyed through the proper channels and not by slander or verbal abuse.

"I noticed some university students complaining about the electricity bill adjustment.

"Electricity rates have not gone up, so is it true they are affected?

"If it is indeed true, then we need to fix it because public universities are exempted," he said at the Prime Minister's Department's monthly assembly, Bernama reported.

"Such matters, when spread in the name of freedom, can become avenues for slander and verbal abuse.

"Please provide facts. I have no issue with people complaining or offering criticism," he said.

The Prime Minister explained that the adjustment of electricity tariffs and the expansion of the Sales and Service Tax (SST) are to ensure that those with higher financial means contribute a fairer share, while protecting segments of the population from undue financial pressure.

"If possible, we would rather not burden the people with taxes.

"But if there are one or two cases where people are affected, we can make improvements.

"However, to outright oppose the electricity (tariff) adjustment,



**A message for civil servants:** Anwar (fourth from right) giving a speech at the Prime Minister's Department monthly assembly. With him are Deputy Prime Ministers Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (fourth from left) and Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof (third from right). — Bernama

I think that's not right," he said.

On June 9, the government announced a targeted review of the Sales Tax rate and the expansion of the Service Tax scope, which will take effect today.

The Energy Commission had announced that more than 23.6

million domestic users in Peninsular Malaysia will benefit from a fairer and more progressive electricity tariff structure that will be in effect from today to Dec 31, 2027.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister said the East Coast Economic

Region Development Council (ECERDC) has successfully recorded RM6.4bil in realised investments in the first six months of this year.

The ECERDC has also successfully created more than 2,800 jobs to date, he added.

"The amount of committed investments has reached RM10.4bil, surpassing the RM10bil target set for 2025," he said in a post on his official Facebook page.

Earlier, Anwar attended a meeting with the ECERDC to review the latest progress on key performance indicators for the economic corridor, and to discuss the development framework for the East Coast Economic Region (ECER).

"I emphasised the importance of prioritising the country's long-term interests in attracting investors, including ensuring technology and skills transfer elements in every approved investment.

"The ECERDC needs to maintain this momentum through an efficient and proactive facilitation process which will strengthen the region as a competitive investment destination both nationally and internationally," he added.

Meanwhile, the ECERDC said the manufacturing sector accounted for 59% of the RM6.4bil realised investments, with Pahang leading the list with RM4bil, followed by Terengganu (RM1.3bil) and Kelantan (RM1.1bil).

Johor reported investments amounting to RM13.3mil in the agriculture sector, specifically from the establishment of a bio-compost facility in Mersing.

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