

Cost relief 'tribute' likely

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Govt ironing out plans to ease rakyat's burden, says Anwar

BUTTERWORTH: The Prime Minister has hinted at an important announcement, described as an "extraordinary tribute" to Malaysians, which will be made either tomorrow or on Tuesday. It is expected to address efforts to ease the rising cost of living.

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the Finance Ministry is currently refining proposals that can be announced immediately to ease the burden on the people and address current issues.

Anwar said that more time is needed to enhance the "surprise" before the big reveal.

"I need a little more time to make the announcement, to allow my team under the Finance Ministry to prepare the 'surprise' in greater detail to ensure it is comprehensive.

"If not Monday, Tuesday ... give

me two or three more days to refine it."

The Prime Minister said the government is looking for the best approach to balance the rising cost of living with the country's fiscal capacity, given that existing expenditure on assistance such as the Rahmah Cash Contribution and civil servant salary increases has reached billions of ringgit.

"We want to increase salaries and allowances for public servants by RM10bil this year and next year by an additional RM18bil.

"We want to do the same with the STR by RM13bil, making it RM23bil.

"Every day at the Finance Ministry, we are working hard to find an approach that can be announced soon, especially to

address the cost of living," he said when launching the Bumiputra Master Plan, the Tunas Madani programme and the JKPSB housing project yesterday.

Anwar announced via social media earlier this week that he would make an important announcement as a gesture of appreciation for Malaysians.

At the same event, the Prime Minister said that eight newly appointed Court of Appeal judges and 14 High Court judges are scheduled to be sworn in on July 28.

He said the appointment process had gone through all the necessary stages, including the assessment by the Judicial Appointments Commission, discussions with the Malay Rulers, and the consent of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

"Many have asked me why it was not announced earlier. I cannot answer arbitrarily because the process of appointing judges involves the consent of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

"It needs to go through discussions with the Rulers and after it is agreed, it will then be brought back to the King for consent," Anwar explained.

Earlier this week, His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim, King of Malaysia, consented to the appointment of the new Chief Justice of the Federal Court, Datuk Wan Ahmad Farid Wan Salleh, Datuk Abu Bakar Jais as President of the Court of Appeal, and Datuk Azizah Nawawi as Chief Judge of Sabah and Sarawak.

Their official swearing-in and presentation of letters of appointment will also be held on July 28.