

M40 to gain from RON95 price cut and toll hike halt

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PUTRAJAYA: The middle income group (M40) is expected to benefit from the drop in price for RON95 petrol and the pause in toll rate hikes, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said this is since the M40 are the most frequent users of this type of fuel and of the 10 expressways affected by the rate increase freeze.

“So if the M40 group says we’re only focusing on the B40 for now ... we actually started even lower – with the hardcore poor – then moved to the B40, and now we’re moving up to the M40,” Anwar said yesterday, Bernama reported.

“That’s the situation. That’s why I said we need to be patient with the implementation. But at the

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very least, for the M40 group and above, both RON95 and the toll initiatives bring benefits,” said Anwar at the Finance Ministry’s assembly.

In his “Appreciation Announcement for Malaysians” speech on July 23, the Prime Minister said the government had agreed to postpone toll rate hikes for 10 highways to allow the public to continue enjoying the current rates.

Among the highways involved are the Senai-Desaru Expressway, East Coast Expressway 2, South

Klang Valley Expressway, Butterworth Outer Ring Road and the KL-Putrajaya Expressway (MEX).

Anwar also announced that under the targeted fuel subsidy scheme in September, most Malaysian motorists would pay RM1.99 per litre for RON95 petrol as compared to the present price of RM2.05.

In his speech yesterday, Anwar also hit back at detractors of the RM100 Sumbangan Asas Rahmah programme where RM100 will be given to Malaysians to buy essential goods.

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said while the amount may seem small to high-income earners, it means a lot to rural communities and low-income groups.

“(Critics say) It’s just RM100, but you’re earning RM40,000 or RM20,000 a month. Of course RM100 means nothing to you, but I know its value when we go to the villages.”

The Prime Minister also explained that for a poor household with two adult children and a married couple, the cash assistance would total to RM400, and when combined with the existing Sumbangan Tunai Rahmah, the amount could increase to as much as RM700.

“So don’t trivialise these efforts, because this is what we (the government) can do to add to the existing allocation, from RM13bil to RM15bil.”

Anwar also hit back at politicians who criticised the targeted

fuel subsidy scheme, which is aimed at preventing foreigners from buying RON95 fuel.

“The Opposition Leader (Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainudin) questioned why we are burdening foreigners ... I find that strange.

“What do you expect us to do? You’re free to comment and criticise, no problem – but we’re not mistreating them or denying them their rights.

“We’re simply withdrawing subsidies because in their own countries, fuel prices are higher than RM2.50.

“In Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia, it’s all more expensive,” he said.

“We remove subsidies for foreigners, and even that is considered wrong.”