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PM Anwar launches Padu database to improve delivery of targeted subsidies



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim speaks during the launch of the Central Database Hub (Padu) in Putrajaya January 2, 2024. — Picture by Shafwan Zaidon

PUTRAJAYA, Jan 2 — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim officially launched the Central Database Hub (Padu) today, paving the way towards a fairer distribution of targeted subsidies for Malaysians in need.

In his speech, Anwar acknowledged the criticism that followed Padu's announcement but spoke of the need to digitise the delivery system, saying that failure to do so would benefit undeserving groups such as those who are affluent over those truly in need.

“The definition of subsidies is ‘handout’, assistance to those in need and for decades this practice remained unchanged in Malaysia, enjoyed by everyone, including non-Malaysians.

“So that is why when Padu is being opposed, I always ask, who are you trying to defend? The foreigners? The wealthiest?”

“Because the ones still receiving subsidies are 85 per cent of Malaysians,” he said in his speech at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre here.

Padu — now considered the most comprehensive database established by the government to date — is a system containing individual and household profiles encompassing citizens and permanent residents in Malaysia.

The objective of Padu is to provide a safe, comprehensive and near real-time national main database that enables more accurate data analytics to be produced as well as for policy formulation and data-driven decision-making processes, besides enabling targeted policy implementation to balance the fiscal position.

Padu integrates microdata from various government departments and agencies to create profiles of individuals and households for some 28.3 million Malaysian citizens.

At present, Anwar said subsidies expenditure incurred by the government had reached as much as RM80 billion, stating that Malaysia cannot sustain its fiscal policies if leakages involving subsidies remain unresolved.

This was further compounded by said subsidies not reaching their intended targets.

Anwar said the Padu initiative was part of his government's drive towards digital transformation and a sophisticated central repository data hub would ensure a more comprehensive benefit that every government service will be enjoyed by deserving recipients.

"There must be determination and without compromise.

"Without Padu, there will be much leakage, otherwise, there is no reason why there are still groups of poor in the country," he said.

The public, aged 18 and above, are encouraged to register and update their information at Padu's website until March 31.