

86,766 poor in the state

KOTA KINABALU: There are 86,766 poor, hardcore poor and delisted individuals in the State, as of Dec 1, said Rural Development Minister Datuk Jahid Jahim.

Of this number, Jahid said, 41,490 are hardcore poor, while 24,864 are poor and 20,412 delisted persons.

(In the e-Kasih system, there is a category called “Terkeluar” (Delisted) – the households in the category have passed the poverty line but their information is still stored in the e-Kasih. They are also referred to as “poor” because they can return to the poor or hardcore poor categories.)

Jahid said the government had reviewed the methodology of setting the Poverty Line Income (PLI) so that it would depict the current consumption pattern, needs and demography of a household.

“The PLI calculation was last updated in 2005 and the PLI in 2016 was RM980 per month for a household,” he said in response to a question by Kadamaian assemblyman Datuk Ewon Benedick at the State Legislative Assembly sitting, here, Tuesday.

A study had been conducted by the Prime Minister’s Department’s Economic Planning Unit (EPU) with the cooperation of the **Statistics Department (DOSM)**, Health Ministry and other related ministries and agencies from March 2019 until June 2020.

As a result, he said, the PLI setting methodology had been improved in three aspects.

“The concept of setting food PLI is streamlined from ‘minimum’ to ‘optimum minimum’ by taking into account the improvement of the quality of food basket items based on the 2020 Food Pyramid and the 2020 Malaysian Diet Guide (PDM) food group in line with daily physical activity and healthy living.

“For non-food PLI, the needs of the lowest 20 per cent income group (B20) have increased from 106 to 146 items.

“This means, 40 items that were previously not considered basic requirements to the B20 group, have now been included in the list.

“And the third aspect is changes in household spending patterns, current prices of goods and services in 2019 compared to 2005.”

In his supplementary question, Ewon expressed concerns that more people would fall into the poor or hardcore poor categories post-pandemic.

“What is the Ministry’s plan to handle this increase and is it ready to meet with our side (the Opposition) to discuss ways to defend the people?”

To this, Jahid said, the Ministry had planned various approaches.

“However, to add value to these approaches, the Ministry is open to conduct engagement with Kadamaian (Ewon) or any stakeholders for brainstorming.

“The pandemic is an unprecedented common issue and we are open about this (the proposal to discuss with the Opposition),” he said.

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