

Budget 2022: More help for B40 to cope with Covid fallout

THE government is expected to continue focusing on the bottom 40% (B40) group with more assistance to be doled out in Budget 2022 to cope with the economic fallout of the pandemic.

The budget, which will lead Malaysia's recovery from the prolonged effect of Covid 19, is also expected to give education and meaningful job creation a boost.

Putra Business School's Assoc Prof Dr Ahmed Razman Abdul Latiff expects the B40 group will continue to be the centre of attention and there will be a continuation of a one-off assistance in the form of Bantuan Prihatin Nasional (BPN).

"Hopefully health insurance coverage will also be continued as well as other forms of assistance towards vulnerable groups like single mothers, disabled persons and young people.

"Special assistance to help the school-children of B40 to catch-up on their education should also be given."

In addition, he said more job opportunities that pay higher salaries should be created for the B40 group, as well as financial support and training for those who want to do business.

Echoing the same sentiment on education, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute senior fellow Dr Lee Hwok Aun said help for B40 households to cope with Covid-19 disruptions on schooling is urgently needed because they have been the hardest hit.

"Certainly, financial assistance should be targeted to make sure that B40 school-children do not fall further behind.

"I think by and large, the existing programmes like cash transfers for B40 households and individuals, and perhaps for targeted service sectors and the self-employed/micro-enterprise operators and hiring incentives will continue," he told The Malaysian Reserve (TMR).

Meanwhile, Universiti Kuala Lumpur Business School's Assoc Prof Dr Aimi Zulhazmi Abdul Rashid also said the government should continue providing assistance like Bantuan Prihatin Rakyat as per the previous package released.

He said the government should come up with a long-term solution to alleviate the poverty level in Budget 2022, as well as a better minimum wage level.

"The current minimum wage is RM1,100, which is lower than the Poverty Line Income (PLI) of RM2,208 announced by the Department of Statistics Malaysia."

Malaysia's PLI was revised last year to RM2,208 by the government, according to calculations based on the 2019 methodology. The PLI was previously calculated according to the 2005

methodology, which bench-marked poverty at RM980, based on the basic requirements for a household to live healthily and actively.

The government said the PLI revision was in accordance with current needs that emphasise optimal food intake and quality non-food basic requirements.

Concurrently, there have been overwhelming calls for the revision of the minimum wage especially among young people.

TMR earlier reported that the Malaysian Youth Council presented a memorandum to the government for minimum wage to be revised.

Its president Jufitri Joha said the salaries offered are very low compared to the cost of living, which has increased, and this has led to unemployment among youths.

<https://themalaysianreserve.com/2021/10/07/budget-2022-more-help-for-b40-to-cope-with-covid-fallout/>