

## **Maszlee calls for return of free breakfast programme in primary schools**

KUALA LUMPUR: The free breakfast programme should be reintroduced in primary schools nationwide under the 12th Malaysian Plan (12MP) as it can benefit those who are affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, says former education minister Dr Maszlee Malik.

**Citing reports by the Statistics Department, Maszlee (Independent-Simpang Renggam) said the number of elite T20 groups saw a reduction of 12% due to the pandemic, while it is estimated that 20% from M40 have fallen into the B40 group.**

"This indirectly affects the growth of children and also their education. The process of raising children through nutritious food is also included in the integrated education process.

"Therefore, the free breakfast programme for primary school children must be reintroduced under the 12MP," said Maszlee during his speech on 12MP in Parliament on Thursday (Sept 30).

Maszlee said according to studies conducted in 2019, it was estimated that 2.7 million children would benefit from the free breakfast programme for 200 days a year.

"It is set to benefit even more due to the Covid-19 pandemic," he added.

Maszlee said 50,000 teachers nationwide will benefit from the programme and it will involve 7,772 schools.

"This will benefit chicken, beef, fish suppliers as well as other grocers located in the vicinity of the schools."

Maszlee added that it will indirectly benefit those in the lower income group who were economically affected by the pandemic.

"There's an average of 100,000 canteen workers across the country. This means that about 500,000 family members of these workers will benefit from the programme," he added.

The free breakfast programme was announced in 2019 during Maszlee's tenure as education minister.

It was then launched at 100 primary schools nationwide in January last year, but it was cancelled as schools were forced to close due to the pandemic.

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2021/09/30/maszlee-calls-for-return-of-free-breakfast-programme-in-primary-schools>