



YOUR OPINION

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Database for devising targeted aid

ONE of the key responsibilities of the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) is to regularly provide accurate, comprehensive and impartial statistics.

Malaysia's socioeconomic development has advanced significantly, thanks to important initiatives like the Population Census and the Household Income and Expenditure Survey, both carried out by DOSM.

These surveys were essential in the creation of the New Economic Policy (NEP), the country's first long-term development plan (1971–1990).

The objective of the NEP, which was to promote inclusive and high-quality development, was accomplished through the reduction of poverty from 49.3% of the population in 1970 to 16.5% in 1990. As of 2022, the incidence of poverty was 6.2%.

In the 1970s, Malaysia's economic landscape was predominantly agricultural. In the following years, it underwent successful economic diversification, transi-

tioning from heavy reliance on agriculture to manufacturing.

This transformative shift highlights the pivotal role played by DOSM not only in providing essential socioeconomic data but also in ensuring comprehensive coverage of economic information nationwide.

DOSM's involvement extends beyond data collection as it actively contributes to the understanding of Malaysia's economic dynamics. For instance, to measure the country's GDP, which reached RM1.79 trillion in 2022, DOSM conducts economic censuses every five years, covering 1.27 million establishments.

Economic surveys are conducted in non-census years.

The government has recognised that a more targeted and concentrated approach is required to fulfil its unwavering commitment to both economic growth and fair income distribution. The crucial solution to address this challenge lies in the substantial contribution made by the newly-launched cen-

tral database hub, Padu.

With the integration of data from 455 agencies and inclusion of information from 29.8 million residents, Padu holds significance beyond just data integration; it acts as a fundamental element in preventing additional leakages, a crucial step that should not be underestimated.

The government's decision to prioritise Padu demonstrates a strategic commitment to diverting subsidies to the areas where they are most needed, guaranteeing a more effective, efficient and fair distribution of resources.

In the early stages of the country's development, the government placed emphasis on infrastructure development to boost economic activity and improve the living standards of the people. Building vital components like ports, airports and highways showed a dedication to improving infrastructure and eventually making business operations easier on a daily basis.

This coordinated effort isn't

limited to a single industry; it also encompasses the tourism sector, which entails the construction of stunning airports, provision of first-rate services at immigration checkpoints, and setting up effective transit systems to guarantee hassle-free travel for visitors to our magnificent nation.

Simultaneously, the emphasis for government projects has shifted from constructing large buildings or other physical infrastructure to prioritising robust data-related systems, particularly in this digital age.

This modification recognises the urgent need to create systems that can effectively manage and store all pertinent business and personal data, thereby positioning Padu as the focal point of Malaysia's extensive citizen database.

Strong security measures are in place at Padu because it has been meticulously planned. The government's heightened security posture is testament of its steadfast commitment to safeguarding

the integrity, confidentiality and privacy of citizens' data.

The government as well as the rakyat have become increasingly concerned in recent times about the fiscal deficit, which has increased substantially from RM23.4bil in 1980 to RM1.079 trillion in 2022.

A portion of this are payments for subsidies without considering differences in individual income growth, citizenship status and practical needs.

The Padu initiative is a proactive measure to prevent wastage and provide focused aid to individuals who truly require it. Padu establishes a new benchmark for fair reconstruction and economic aid while prioritising the welfare of all Malaysian citizens.

It will be the new benchmark for equitable rebuilding and non-discriminatory economic relief for every Malaysian citizen.

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