

### **Convincing economic recovery outlook**

KOTA KINABALU: Sabah's current economic recovery remains in a convincing outlook with a better trend, said Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor.

"It can be seen through the State's macro-economic indicators in 2021 compared to 2020, despite the global economic slowdown caused by various factors," he said during question time at the State Legislative Assembly sitting, Monday.

He said based on a preliminary report released by the **Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM)**, Sabah's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been recorded to grow at a positive rate of 1.1 per cent compared to a contraction of 9.5 per cent the previous year.

Apart from that, he said, the highest ever State revenue collection was recorded in 2021 with RM5.449 billion.

"Dividends by agencies and GLCs under the Sabah Government continued to increase to RM116.35 million last year compared to RM100.39 million in 2020."

He said in the long run the people's economy can be driven through human capital development. "The Sabah Government will ensure that Sabah children do not drop out or lag behind in education to ensure their future.

"Therefore, to prevent this situation from happening, the Sabah Government through the SMJ Development Plan has introduced several incentive packages to be provided to Sabah children, to enable them to continue their studies.

"The implementation of the incentive packages is carried out through education assistance programmes that have been implemented with an allocation of RM24 million last year, such as the Higher Education Institutions Assistance Programme, Compassionate Computer Assistance Programme (Baik), Special Examination Cash Assistance Programme (Bakti) and IPT Registration Assistance Programme (Budi).

"This initiative also provides an economic impact through the money cycle in the market, at the same time, helping to ease the burden of the people who are already affected by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic," he said.

This year, Hajiji said, the Sabah Government has launched the State Education Fund (TPNS) to provide special educational assistance for Sabahan children from the B40 group to open up more opportunities for them to further their studies at higher learning institutions with a start-up fund of RM54.5 million. The Sabah Government has also established the Sabah Welfare Foundation (YKS) to work on the welfare agenda through the strengthening of cooperative relations between the Government and NGOs, corporate and private, as well as other bodies that are willing to raise funds and channel contributions to the underprivileged.

"This is to ensure that they would not be left behind, especially in the economic sector." Aside from that, to help ease the economic burden of the people, especially in affordable house ownership, the

Sabah Government is planning to build 1,500 units of SMJ Friendly Houses built in 73 State constituencies involving an expenditure of RM125.6 million.

Meanwhile, employment opportunities for youths continue to be diversified to improve the economy of this group.

On July 14, he said, the Government through the Sabah Economic Development and Investment Authority (Sedia) has provided assistance in the form of motorcycles to 300 youths through the Bizrider300 initiative.

He said this initiative is implemented in collaboration with digital-oriented companies to open more job opportunities for the people by delivering food and daily necessities.

"The programme will be expanded so that more unemployed youths get employment opportunities," he said.

A total of 42,097 women in Sabah also received benefits through the i-Suri Contribution Fund (Baiduri) e-Kasih assistance initiative involving an allocation of RM2.5 million.

"This assistance involves an initial one-off contribution from the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) amounting to RM60 per person to women in the targeted e-Kasih category.

"This initiative has given e-Kasih women the opportunity to benefit RM480 each from the Federal Government through EPF.

"The implementation of this initiative will certainly provide an opportunity for women, especially housewives, to venture into business and help them enjoy quality social security as well as to elevate their financial security as enjoyed by other EPF members," he said.

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