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CASH AID

Experts believe Dr M has realised BR1M works

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysia People's Aid (BRIM) has proven to be an essential social security net for the low-income group.

Commenting on Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's apparent change in stance concerning the cash aid, analysts and political leaders said the former prime minister's about-turn in Shah Alam on Saturday shows that BRIM was indeed a workable approach to increase the targeted group's disposable income.

The Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) chairman had criticised BRIM as a form of "corruption", claiming it was "illegal".

Professor Dr Sivamurugan Pandian told the *New Straits Times* yesterday that the cash aid was one of the promises made by Barisan Nasional in the last general election.

"In fact, the prime minister and Bank Negara may continue with BRIM or provide the people with a better mechanism (for financial aid) after the next GE. PPBM saying that it will continue with it if it wins the next GE shows that BRIM is a workable approach."

Political analyst Professor Dr Azizuddin Mohd Sani said Dr Mahathir's statement showed that he had realised the importance of BRIM for the low-income group.

"Even economists agree that

BRIM is needed. That is why Dr Mahathir changed his position on this issue."

In **Klang**, MCA Youth chief Datuk Chong Sin Woon said he believed Dr Mahathir had come to understand that BRIM was important for the people's welfare.

"We (BN government) provide assistance directly to those who need it, instead of a blanket aid," he said at the Klang Hokkien Association Building here after launching an event where a rooster calligraphy was recognised as the largest by the *Malaysia Book of Records* yesterday.

Umno Supreme Council member Datuk Seri Irmohizam Ibrahim likened Dr Mahathir's U-turn to the proverb "*bagaikan ludah dijilat kembali*".

"BRIM does not only help to cushion the people's financial burden, but also acts as a social security net. And the government did not just continue this assistance, but increased its amount for 2017."

Dr Mahathir had also said that he would abolish the Goods and Services Tax and replace it with a new sales tax.

Parti Cinta Malaysia vice-president Datuk Huan Cheng Guan said the reintroduction of the sales tax would be a regressive step to reduce illicit outflows.



Dr Sivamurugan Pandian