



**GRAND WELCOME...** Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin inspecting a guard of honour on arrival at Bandar Seri Begawan International Airport yesterday on a two-day official visit to Brunei. **-BERNAMAPIX**

## Prihatin shows govt cares about small businesses

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The assistance provided through the Prihatin Special Grant (Prihatin) reflects the government's concern towards micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that are the bedrock of the country's economy.

Prihatin, aimed at helping MSMEs affected by Covid-19, was introduced during the first round of the movement control order last year. To date, the grants have helped 900,000 MSMEs with a total allocation of RM3.58 billion.

The aid is expected to alleviate the financial burden shouldered by small businesses, especially in areas relating to working capital such as restocking of inventory, purchasing

raw materials and boosting cash reserves.

Sunway University economics professor Dr Yeah Kim Leng said the assistance is a sign that the government is steadfast in continuously supporting MSMEs during the recovery phase.

The assistance is a much-needed stop-gap measure as a full recovery for MSMEs as well as small and medium enterprises (SMEs) will only happen when both domestic and global economies fully recover, he said.

University of Malaya's Faculty of Economics and Administration senior lecturer Dr Mohammad Tawfik Yaakub said although the Prihatin assistance is viewed as small, the continuous extension of assistance is making an impact on the country's chain of recovery,

albeit gradually, reported Bernama.

"All sectors face a debt issue and if the government had not given the aid, SMEs would have been caught up further in the economic crisis affecting not only the country but the whole world."

National Entrepreneur Foundation chairman Datuk Seri Megat D. Shahrizan Zaharudin said it would be better if this one-off assistance could be given continuously until the Covid-19 pandemic is over or at least for another year.

Bank Islam Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said although the assistance given by the government is timely, it is a short-term relief.