

# PM unveils RM40bil aid package

Economic stimulus aims to help businesses and people weather lockdown

## PEMERKASA+

**PETALING JAYA:** The PemerKasa Plus economic stimulus package has been unveiled in a bid to support the healthcare sector, businesses and Malaysians as the country heads into a total lockdown starting today.

Packed with a number of initiatives to alleviate the people's burden and assist both the public and private sectors as the nation battles the onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic, the RM40bil aid package with a RM5bil direct fiscal injection from the government is a continuation of several similar economic stimulus packages worth a total of RM340bil since the pandemic started last year.

Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said PemerKasa Plus was anchored on three main goals: to increase public healthcare capacity, continue the rakyat welfare agenda and support business sustainability.

"To date, it has benefited more than 20 million households and more than two million businesses, with an economic injection of more than RM200bil.

"As such, there is still RM100bil left in the packages to be channelled for this year," he said in his speech yesterday.

Muhyiddin said the latest PemerKasa Plus initiative was to help alleviate the challenges Malaysians would face following the recent stricter implementation of the movement control order.

"The overall value of the PemerKasa Plus programme is RM40bil, with the direct fiscal injection from the government worth RM5bil.

"The closing of economic sectors will leave a huge impact on the country's economy and people's livelihoods.

"I wish to be honest that the government has limited 'fiscal room' to spend during this time.



**Latest update:**  
Muhyiddin delivering his address about the PemerKasa Plus package on television.  
— Bernama

"However, based on the principle of showing care towards the rakyat's welfare, the government will try its best to ensure that there will be a balance between lives and livelihoods," he said.

He highlighted that to this end, the government would continue to employ a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach in battling the Covid-19 pandemic.

"This refers to optimising the whole healthcare workforce and frontliners out on the field as well as the role of Malaysians in breaking the Covid-19 chain of transmission," he added.

To increase public healthcare capacity, he announced that RM450mil had been allocated to increase bed and intensive care unit capacity for Covid-19 patients in public hospitals, teaching hospitals and army hospitals besides outsourcing to private hospitals.

"A total of RM550mil will support Covid-19-related expenses by various agencies, including medicines, reagents and contract workers' appointments.

"We will increase the service period of over 14,000 contract medical officers and nurses

until 2022. Over 500 healthcare personnel due to retire this year will also be reappointed," he said.

To continue the government's rakyat welfare agenda, Muhyiddin said RM2.1bil had been allocated for the Bantuan Prihatin Rakyat cash aid programme.

Households earning below RM2,500 will receive RM500; those earning between RM2,501 and RM5,000 will receive RM300.

Malaysians who are single will also get RM100, he said.

He added that the additional aid would be credited to the recipient's account by June.

He noted that those in the B40 groups, those who lost their jobs as well as small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that were not allowed to operate during the movement control order had been given the option of automatic approval of bank moratoriums for three months or a 50% reduction in loan repayments for six months.

"This will start in June and is expected to benefit more than five million borrowers, amounting to RM30bil," he said.

He also announced RM1bil for the Bus and

Taxi Hire Purchase Rehabilitation Scheme to allow eligible bus and taxi operators to get a loan moratorium for up to 12 months and extend the loan period for up to 36 months.

Furthermore, he said a 30% discount on the rental of business premises would be given for the months of May to July for Mara entrepreneurs affected by the economic closure.

He said the government had also allocated RM1.5bil for a month's worth of the Wage Subsidy Programme under the Social Security Organisation (Socso) for all affected economic sectors, with a limit of 500 employees per application.

"This is expected to benefit 2.5 million employees and over 200,000 employers," he said, adding that employers registered with Pembangunan Sumber Manusia Bhd would be given a levy payment exemption for one month in June.

To support business sustainability, the government announced an extra RM500 in the Prihatin Special Grant payout, bumping up the total payout to RM1,500.

An RM1.5bil allocation is also set aside for traders who wish to get microcredit for working capital, with financing rates as low as 3%.

Apart from these, Muhyiddin announced an extra RM2bil in the Targeted Relief and Recovery Facility for affected SMEs.

With the previous leftover amount of RM5bil, a RM7bil loan fund is now available for small businesses with interest rates of as low as 3.5%, he said.

He added that a one-off aid of RM500 would be given to tour vehicle drivers, taxi drivers, bus drivers and e-hailing drivers.

Electricity bill discounts of 10% will be given to hoteliers, tour agencies, shopping centres and theme parks from July to September.

Tax cuts will be given to premises owners who offer at least 30% rental discounts for another six months until Dec 31.

The Star - 1/6/2021 pg. 3