

PM: GOVT TO DO MORE TO BOOST PEOPLE'S INCOME

'Measures include providing income generation and improving access to basic needs'

ARFA YUNUS
AND HANA NAZ HARUN
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

THE government will continue with policies and strategies to increase the income and purchasing power, particularly for poor households among the B40 group in the mid- and long-term, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

The measures include providing income generation and capacity-building programmes; improving access to basic needs including education, health and housing; promoting entrepreneurship and access to financing; and improving social protection.

He said the government had provided various forms of assistance under eight stimulus packages to alleviate the burden of affected individuals and households, adding that these financial packages were, however, short-term aids.

Among others, he added, the government had introduced the Bantuan Prihatin Nasional, Bantuan Prihatin Rakyat, and Bantuan Khas Covid-19 cash aid totalling RM24.9 billion, which had



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob (front) in Parliament yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

helped 10.9 million individuals and households.

He said the government had also announced bank loan moratoriums benefiting seven million borrowers, and electricity bill discounts amounting to RM3.14 billion, benefiting 8.8 million individuals and households.

"We have also given RM300,000 to each parliamentarian, including opposition members of parliament, to implement the Food Basket Aid for about 375,000 recipients, and maintaining and creating jobs, including the Wage Subsidy Programme, which has helped about 300,000 employers and retained more than 2.7 million jobs," he told the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Ismail was responding to a

question from Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim (PH-Port Dickson) on the steps taken by the government and the explanation on the reducing nationwide monthly household gross income.

He said the Covid-19 pandemic had caused Malaysia's economy to contract by 5.6 per cent last year.

"Based on the Household Income Estimates and Incidence of Poverty Report by the Department of Statistics Malaysia, the average monthly gross household income has decreased by 10.3 per cent from RM7,901 in 2019 to RM7,089 last year, and the incidence of poverty has increased to 8.4 per cent involving 639,800 households compared with 5.6 per cent or 405,400 households in 2019."