

# PM UNVEILS AID TO HELP THE NEEDY COPE

NSF-26/12/2022 Pg. 2

Slew of measures from cash aid to pay increment to deal with cost of living

## KUALA LUMPUR

**T**HE Dewan Rakyat yesterday unanimously passed the Consolidated Fund (Expenditure on Account) Bill 2022, which provides RM107.72 billion in civil service expenditure for a part of 2023.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who is also the finance minister, said the mini-budget that he tabled would give temporary parliamentary approval for the government to spend a portion of the total estimated expenses during the months prior to the retabling and passing of the Supply Bill for 2023.

The estimated expenses under the bill include salary payments to civil servants, utilities, scholarships, welfare assistance, education and health services and development projects that need to be continued, especially repair and maintenance work.

“We have to take into account the limitations of this temporary expenditure estimate, which is limited to the government’s existing policies and commitments for the first six months of 2023 first.

“What is good will be continued, especially existing initiatives that provide benefits to the people. Other expenses will be reviewed in preparation for the representation of the 2023 Budget,” he said during the tabling.

The mini-budget will take effect from Jan 1, 2023 until the date the 2023 Supply Bill (2023 Budget) becomes law and is operational.

Anwar said the full 2023 Budget would be tabled in February next year.

Under the mini-budget, the Treasury General Services will receive the highest allocation at RM28.118 billion. This is followed by the Education Ministry (RM24.97 billion), Health Ministry (RM17 billion), Home Ministry (RM6.9 billion), Higher Ed-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim tabling the 2023 mini-budget at the Dewan Rakyat yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

ucation Ministry (RM5.85 billion) and Defence Ministry (RM5.7 billion).

The prime minister also announced a slew of measures designed to help the people to manage the rising cost of living.

He said the first phase of the Bantuan Tunai Rakyat (BTR) cash aid, with an allocation of RM2 billion, would be rolled out in January next year, benefiting almost nine million recipients. This will see households receive RM300 each in aid and single recipients will receive RM100.

Anwar also touched on the need to create job opportunities.

“The government will provide 50,000 contractual career opportunities, including 35,000 by government-linked companies (GLCs), through the Malaysia Short-term Employment Programme (MySTEP) next year,” he said.

He also announced an annual special salary increment of RM100 for civil servants from Grades 11 to 56 for next year.

“The government has also agreed to provide a special financial aid of RM700 for 1.3 million civil servants in Grade 56 and below and RM350 for one million retired public servants.”

He said all schoolchildren, regardless of their families’ income bracket, would receive a RM150 aid in January next year to purchase equipment for the new school term.

“With an entire generation missing out on their education

following the recent Covid-19 pandemic crisis, it is important to prepare children with appropriate school equipment.

“In addition to the expenditure requirements for the Supplementary Food Programme and the purchase of textbooks, the government has agreed to channel RM150 to all schoolchildren, regardless of the parents’ income limit in January 2023.”

He also announced an additional RM200 cash aid for small-time rubber farmers under the Monsoon Season Aid (Bantuan Musim Tengkujuh) in January next year.

“The government will continue to ensure the welfare of rubber smallholders during this monsoon season.

“So far, the government has distributed cash aid for November and December with a total of RM600 each to nearly 320,000 rubber smallholders.”

Political observers, meanwhile, said the proceedings yesterday showed that after four years of intense politicking, matters pertaining to economic recovery and nation-building were finally taking precedence.

Associate Professor Dr Awang Azman Awang Pawi said the prime minister “understood his assignment” for a stable and united administration that is imperative to formulate a plan to build back a better investment climate following the global economic challenges next year.