

# PM: GOVT SEEKING WAYS TO AID PEOPLE

Some people have almost exhausted retirement savings, says Anwar

ROHANIZA IDRIS  
KUALA SELANGOR  
news@nst.com.my

**P**RIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has made it clear that the government will not accede to suggestions for people to be allowed to withdraw from their Employees Provident Fund (EPF) savings again.

He said the government was finding ways to reduce people's financial stress without having to dip into their EPF savings.

He said this was because the people had been allowed to make several EPF withdrawals and this had almost decimated their retirement savings.

"Most of their (EPF) savings have been withdrawn before. Some are only left with RM10,000 or RM5,000. So, they have to think of their options.

"If they were to retire in four years, what will happen?" he told reporters after the Universiti Selangor's Kursi Sid-diq Fadzil Distinguished Lecture at its Bestari Jaya campus here yesterday.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said this in reply to a question as to whether the revised 2023 Budget to be tabled on Feb 24 would include another round of EPF withdrawals.

Many quarters, including non-governmental organisations, have called for EPF withdrawals to be allowed to help those affected by the rising cost of living and those who have yet to recover from the economic effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the movement control orders.

The latest was Umno Youth, which called for targeted withdrawals to be allowed.

EPF withdrawals were allowed four times in the past two years because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Withdrawals of up to

RM10,000 were allowed last year, in 2021 under the i-Citra scheme and in 2020 under the i-Lestari and i-Sinar schemes.

On the revised budget, Anwar said the focus would be on efforts to deal with the national deficit, digitalisation issues, food safety and the cost of living.

"The other strategies, I will announce during the tabling," he said.

During yesterday's event, Anwar challenged Malaysia's younger generation to "rise up" by rejecting "outdated and old-fashioned" thinking that harmed the country.

"(Whether you are) Malay, Chinese, Indian, Iban or Kadazan, you need to defend your values, your creed, morality, the truth and justice," he said.

Anwar said he was confident that the higher education students of today understood that whatever change they want to happen must ensure that society is united.

*"Some are only left with RM10,000 or RM5,000. So, they have to think of their options. If they were to retire in four years, what will happen?"*