

More benefits from the Budget

PM: Extension of SSPN relief and expanding Hari Raya aid among the initiatives

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim announced several additional initiatives in Budget 2023, mostly benefiting the B40 and M40 groups.

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said yesterday when tabling the Supply Bill 2023 or the national budget for the second reading in the Dewan Negara that the new initiatives include expanding the Hari Raya Aidilfitri assistance, a two-year extension of individual tax relief for the National Education Savings Scheme (SSPN), and the provision of housing credit through the Syarikat Jaminan Kredit Perumahan (SJKP).

“Given the current situation, I looked at cohorts that had not benefited from the previous initiative and found that they were still struggling, especially during Ramadan and Aidilfitri.

“So, the government has agreed to give another RM200 in the Special Aidilfitri Assistance to 850,000 rubber smallholders, padi farmers and fishermen, in addition to what was announced before. This will cost RM170mil,” Anwar said, as reported by Bernama.

Anwar said the increase is the biggest aid the government has ever given to fishermen, padi farmers and rubber smallholders.

In Budget 2023, tabled on Feb 24, the government announced the Special Aidilfitri Assistance of RM300

per month for fishermen and RM200 per month for padi farmers for a period of three months per season. The monsoon contribution also increased from RM600 to RM800 for a period of four months for rubber smallholders.

Apart from that, he said 200,000 volunteers under the Malaysian Volunteer Department (Rela), the

Civil Defence Force, as well as police and fire volunteers, would receive RM300 for Aidilfitri.

Anwar also announced the extension of individual income tax relief of up to RM8,000 for SSPN until 2024.

“This was decided after hearing public concerns and complaints made to the government. This will incur losses of RM250mil per year

in government revenue but benefit approximately 400,000 taxpayers,” he said.

Earlier this week, Deputy Finance Minister Steven Sim was quoted as saying that, starting this year, taxpayers who contribute to the SSPN would no longer be eligible to claim individual tax relief of up to RM8,000.



Warm welcome:

Anwar (left, receiving bouquet) arriving in Hainan to attend the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2023 (BFA 2023) as part of his four-day official visit to China.
— Bernama

The Prime Minister also announced that, effective April 1, this year; the government will expand the target of the SJKP housing credit to those with fixed and fluctuating monthly incomes who want to own their first home, an initiative that is expected to benefit the B40 and M40 groups.

Under Budget 2023, the SJKP housing credit scheme had been improved by increasing the financing guarantee fund from RM3bil to RM5bil to help first-time homebuyers, especially those with no fixed income.

Anwar said the government would also prioritise filling public service positions in critical sectors, especially health and education, and this is expected to involve an additional expenditure of up to RM800mil this year.

He said that Budget 2023, which includes the additional initiatives, demonstrates the unity government's commitment to bringing about change in Malaysia as well as the government's determination to improve governance in order to ensure the welfare of the people.

As it is a great responsibility, he urged all quarters to play their part to make it a success.