PM: Rising cost of living remains a priority for the govt

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KUALA LUMPUR: Despite recent positive economic indicators, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim reaffirmed Putrajaya's commitment to supporting Malaysians grappling with rising living costs.

Anwar acknowledged that while Malaysia's economy grew in the second quarter of 2024, with a reported 5.8% expansion, it does not mean that public concerns, particularly around the cost of living, are completely resolved.

"Am I satisfied? I am not satisfied because we are still facing issues with the cost of living.

"That is why I announced several measures to help the people directly, such as the Rahmah cash aid, which cost RM10bil to benefit nine million people.

"I also announced a salary adjustment for civil servants, set to be tabled in October. This is the highest raise in history," said Anwar during the closing ceremony of the National Cooperatives Congress here yesterday.

Nice to meet you: Anwar at the National Cooperatives Congress closing ceremony in KL. — AZMAN GHANI/The Star

Anwar also expressed hope for improved enforcement to curb rising prices of goods.

According to the Statistics Department, Malaysia's gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 5% in the first half of 2024, up from 4.1% last year.

It also showed significant improvement from the 4.2% growth in the first quarter of the year, the highest since the fourth quarter of 2022 which recorded 7.4%.

Meanwhile, Anwar announced that RM6mil has been allocated to the National Cooperative Movement of Malaysia (Angkasa) for various cooperative programmes nationwide.

This includes a new RM2mil allocation, with RM1mil designated for the Asean Cooperatives programme in light of Malaysia's upcoming Asean chairmanship in 2025, and two RM500,000 allocations for developing and training rural mosque cooperatives.

Additionally, RM2mil has been allocated by the Domestic Trade and Cost of Living Ministry for Rahmah sales, and another RM2mil from the Implementation Coordination Unit under the Prime Minister's Department for the Program Sejati Madani.

Anwar also noted that Putrajaya has agreed in principle to amend legal provisions to transform cooperatives into formal business entities.

He added that the draft amendment Bill, being finalised by the Attorney General's Chambers, will be presented to the Cabinet in about two months.

Present during the event were Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Zuki Ali, Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives Minister Datuk Ewon Benedick and his deputy Datuk R. Ramanan.

Benedick said Angkasa has 7.2 million members across the country and it recorded revenue totalling RM64.6bil last year, exceeding the ministry's 2025 revenue target of RM60bil.

"At the same time, the cooperatives' success in penetrating various economic sectors has increased its share capital and fees amounting to RM17bil, with asset generation worth RM165.9bil," he said.

Benedick is also confident that, given Malaysia's recent positive economic growth, the cooperatives sector will achieve its revenue contribution target of RM73bil under the Malaysian Cooperatives Policy 2030 sooner than anticipated.