

COST OF LIVING

Govt will consider more aid for varsity students

CYBERJAYA: The government is open to considering adjustments to the budget and reducing prices of goods to help university students struggling with the rising cost of living, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

During a town hall at the launch of Multimedia University's (MMU) Faculty of Artificial Intelligence and Engineering (FAIE), a student asked whether the government would consider providing an additional RM100 on top of the one-off payment under the Sumbangan Asas Rahmah aid programme.

"Recently, I approved the RM100 aid for everyone aged 18 and above. Yes, we can look into this.

"But what we have given is a one-off RM100..

"I know there are needs and we can consider it in the budget, whatever adjustments we can make.

He said despite the current cost-of-living challenges, the price of fuel, chicken, eggs and sugar remain significantly lower than in many other countries.

"We must accept that. Is it worrying? Yes, it is," he said.

"If you ask me what concerns me most as prime minister, I remain worried about hardcore poverty, general poverty and the burdens faced by the people.

"That is what we must address



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim launching Multimedia University's Faculty of Artificial Intelligence and Engineering in Cyberjaya yesterday. With him is Multimedia University president Professor Datuk Dr Mazliham Mohd Su'ud (left), NSTP PIC BY MOHD FADLI HAMZAH

as best as we can.

"But believe me, when we raised the salaries of civil servants recently, ministers, deputy ministers and MPs did not get a pay rise.

"That is a signal that we have responsibilities."

He said that the country's procurement system must be transparent to ensure public funds were used prudently.

"That's why I keep stressing governance. If we can implement this, we can save more.

"How much has been recovered over the past one to two years by the Inland Revenue Board and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission from those who amassed wealth outside the rules and laws? It has reached between RM4 billion and RM5 billion."

Present were Communications Minister Datuk Fahmi Fadzil,

Digital Minister Gobind Singh Deo, Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Shamsul Azri Abu Bakar and Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir.

MMU's FAIE will feature state-of-the-art laboratories to foster creativity and collaboration between students, researchers and industry partners, ensuring graduates remain competitive.

The faculty's three-year Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Applied AI programme began in July.

Engineering programmes will be enhanced with AI to equip students with advanced technological skills. Applied AI covers technologies such as machine learning and automation to address real-world challenges, including smart healthcare, autonomous vehicles, intelligent farming and personalised digital assistants.