

Third phase of payouts begins today

RM2bil Rahmah cash aid to benefit 8.6 million recipients

PUTRAJAYA: The government will begin disbursing payments for the Phase Three Rahmah Cash Contribution (STR) starting today, allocating RM2bil to ease the cost of living for low-income households under the government's initiative.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim announced that 8.6 million recipients will receive up to RM650 each through STR Phase Three, an increase of 300,000 recipients compared to the 8.3 million beneficiaries in Phase One last January.

The rise in recipients reflects the government's decision to open new applications and appeals throughout the year to ensure aid reaches all eligible individuals.

"The year-round application and appeal process demonstrates the Madani government's commitment to its responsibility in improving the welfare of the majority, leaving no one behind in benefitting from the nation's wealth.

"More than just cash assistance, STR empowers recipients to achieve financial independence, helping us realise the equality envisioned in the Madani Economy," he said in a statement yesterday, *Bernama* reported.

Anwar, who is the Finance Minister, said that the Phase Three payments will be made to existing and newly registered recipients in the STR database, either through direct bank



Star-studded screening: Anwar (centre) attending the 'Taj Mahal' preview, greeted by Akbar (right) and Zulfikar (left). - LOW BOON TAT/The Star

account credits or cash disbursements via Bank Simpanan Nasional, in stages according to their eligibility categories.

The Finance Ministry said applicants whose names are not found in the STR database must submit an application to allow verification of their eligibility for the aid.

Frequently Asked Questions and eligibility status checks are available on the official STR portal at <https://bantuantunai.hasil.gov.my>.

Meanwhile, Anwar attended a

special preview of the Bollywood film *Taj Mahal: An Eternal Love Story*, during which he met the film's director and producer, Akbar Khan, his long-time friend.

The PM spent about 30 minutes watching the epic film, which tells the timeless love story of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan and his wife, Mumtaz Mahal, leading to the construction of the iconic Taj Mahal monument in Agra, India.

The large-scale production features original filming locations in India and cinematography that highlights the beauty of Mughal

architecture, with a sparkling cast of Bollywood stars that included Kabir Bedi, Zulfikar Sayed, Manisha Koirala, Arbaaz Khan and Sonya Jehan.

Released in 2005, *Taj Mahal: An Eternal Love Story* was once considered among the most expensive Bollywood productions of its time and was marketed as a project showcasing India's rich history and architecture to the world.

The screening at GSC, IOI Mall in Putrajaya, was also attended by Indian High Commissioner to Malaysia B.N. Reddy