

Good news – cash aid, cheaper fuel

THE STAR 24 JUL 2025 pg. 2

Govt offering much-needed relief measures to ease living cost of rakyat

PETALING JAYA: Malaysians can look forward to a series of measures aimed at easing cost of living, including a one-off RM100 cash aid for those 18 years and above, and cheaper RON95 soon.

The cash assistance will be credited directly into their MyKad under the Sumbangan Asas Rahmah (Sara) initiative.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim announced these measures in a special announcement aired live on his social media platforms yesterday.

Offered in conjunction with National Day on Aug 31, he said the incentives were aimed at easing the rising cost of living and a token of appreciation for the people.

“With this announcement, the combined allocation for Sumbangan Tunai Rahmah (STR) and Sara rises from RM13bil to RM15bil this year, marking the first time in history that cash aid is extended to all adult Malaysians,” he said.

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said this initiative would benefit 22 million Malaysians with an allocation of RM2bil.

This assistance, said Anwar, can be used from Aug 31 to Dec 31 this year, to buy essentials at over 4,100 outlets nationwide, including major supermarkets such as Mydin, Lotus’s, Econsave, 99Speedmart and participating grocers.

“It will be distributed on individual basis, not by household. So, for example, a household with a husband, wife and two adult children will receive a total of RM400,” he said.

Anwar said the cost of living remained a pressing challenge that must be addressed wisely and urgently.

He added that while overall inflation in June 2025 dropped to 1.1%, the lowest in 52 months, food and beverage prices continued to rise above the national average.

“There may be some among us who are financially secure and do not need this aid. The govern-



Less is more: The price of RON95 petrol will soon be reduced to RM1.99 per litre under a targeted subsidy scheme with further details to be announced by the end of September. — IZZRAFIQ ALIAS/The Star

ment intends to reallocate any unspent funds by year-end towards assistance programmes for vulnerable groups next year,” he added.

In a separate statement, the Finance Ministry said collectively, households have the potential to receive a higher amount of Sara credit.

“For example, a family comprising a husband, wife, and two children aged 18 and above would receive a total of RM400, instead of just RM100,” it said.

The Sara credit can be used to buy over 90,000 essential items across 14 categories, including rice, egg, household cleaning products, medicine and school supplies.

“The RM100 credit is valid until its expiry date of Dec 31, 2025.

“Any unspent balance will be redistributed to vulnerable groups through a programme to be determined later,” said the ministry.

Sara complemented the Sumbangan Tunai Rahmah (STR) initiative, which provided monthly credits specifically for purchasing basic necessities, it added.

The initiative was introduced by the government in its first Madani Budget in 2023 and currently benefits 5.4 million active recipients.

“Both initiatives are a token of appreciation from the government to all Malaysians who continue to support the nation’s fiscal reform agenda.

“They also reflect the Madani government’s commitment to redistributing the nation’s growing wealth, a result of bold fiscal reforms and more efficient economic management, guided by the Madani Economic Framework.

Anwar also highlighted that the Jualan Rahmah Madani initiative will be enhanced to assist the public in managing living costs.

The government, he added, will double the initiative’s allocation

from RM300mil to RM600mil.

This funding will increase the frequency and expand the Jualan Rahmah Madani to include all 600 state constituencies nationwide, said Anwar, who is also Finance Minister.

“The additional allocation will, among others, increase the frequency and expand the number of locations nationwide, covering all 600 state constituencies,” he said.

Anwar also said the price of RON95 petrol will soon be reduced to RM1.99 per litre under a targeted subsidy scheme with further details to be announced by the end of September.

The government, he said, was committed to optimising national subsidy spending by ensuring that ordinary Malaysians continued to benefit from subsidies, while curbing leakage to those not eligible.

“Once the targeted RON95 subsidy is implemented, the govern-

WATCH THE VIDEO
TheStarTV.com



ment will reduce the price of RON95 petrol to RM1.99 per litre exclusively for Malaysian citizens, while foreign nationals will have to pay the unsubsidised market price.”

The initiative, he said, would benefit about 18 million motorists, including youths as young as 16 and gig economy workers.

“In 2023 and 2024 alone, subsidies for RON95 were estimated to cost nearly RM20bil annually.

“Even this year, despite a drop in global oil prices, the unsubsidised price of RON95 remains around RM2.50 per litre, significantly higher than the subsidised rate Malaysians currently enjoy,” he said.

He explained that the move aims to ensure that ordinary citizens continued receiving fuel subsidy while leakage to ineligible groups, including foreigners, are addressed.

To address the critical need for doctors in hospitals and government healthcare facilities, Anwar also announced that over 4,000 positions for government doctors, including contract medical officers, would be available this year.

He confirmed that 4,352 new doctors, including those on contract, would be hired this year.

According to projections released in 2023 by Dr Hirman Ismail, deputy director of the Health Ministry’s medical development division, the public healthcare sector would require 63,040 doctors by 2025 and 79,931 by 2030.

As of last year, there were nearly 52,000 doctors employed in government service.

FOR MORE:
See pages 3-5, StarBiz