

Call To Distribute BR1M Through Longhouse Chiefs
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 31 (Bernama) -- Some elected Barisan Nasional (BN) representatives and community leaders in rural Sarawak have called on the authorities to come up with a better system for the distribution of the 1Malaysia People's Assistance (BR1M) to make it easier for the recipients.

They have suggested, among others, that the disbursement be made in cash through the village security and development committees in the presence of district officers.

This would enable the village chief or the longhouse chief to distribute the money to recipients in their respective longhouse or village after collecting the handouts from the authorities.

This would help a lot as the recipients, particularly those staying in the rural areas, could save on travel and food costs to get to the nearest town to check on their status as well as to receive their payment.

"The applicants in urban areas have no problem coming to check their status two or three times, but it is a huge problem for rural people as they have to bear high transportation cost. Imagine those who have to come to town using longboats or rented cars," said Tamin assemblyman Joseph Mauh when contacted by Bernama Tuesday.

He said this would also be less burdensome, especially to those above 60 who would not be fit enough to queue up under the scorching sun to get their payment vouchers as well as solve the problem of the illiterate who will be unable to check their names.

Local Councillor Stephen Chendang from Kanowit said the distribution of BR1M through the penghulus and longhouse chiefs from the respective district offices was the best way out.

"What they should do is to send the list of successful applicants to the penghulus who can distribute the list to longhouse chiefs under their jurisdiction. This means the recipients do not have to come to town," he said.

Some applicants interviewed by local newspaper, Borneo Post, also complained that they have to travel a few times just to check whether their applications have been approved and this inconvenienced them.

One of them, Betun Beluko, 66, from Ulu Durin said she had come to town twice since the BR1M recipients were announced on Jan 15 just to check her status and had to wait in a long queue to take her voucher.

"I had to leave my half paralysed husband at home," she lamented as quoted by the newspaper.

However, the authorities in the state explained that many applicants rushed to the district

office to check their application status due to poor understanding of the correct procedure to check and claim their vouchers.

The BR1M disbursement in most areas in Sarawak is coordinated by the respective district office.

As pointed out by Miri Resident Antonio Kahti Galis, once given the list of successful applicants by the Ministry of Finance, the district office staff would contact the applicants concerned to collect their vouchers from the district offices or during special events to present the payment vouchers.

"However, because many are excited to know their status, they can't wait and come in big numbers to check their status," he was quoted as saying by the local daily.

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