

Rising cost of living major concern, survey shows

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KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysians are concerned about the rising cost of living, would like a reduction in income tax, more efforts to curb crime and enhance the delivery of affordable housing schemes, according to a survey by iProperty.com Malaysia.

Part of the REA Group, iProperty.com Malaysia is the country's main property portal, offering comprehensive property listings, related real-estate services and project marketing services.

While the nation waited for Budget 2017 to be announced on Friday, iProperty.com Malaysia conducted an online survey on about 300 respondents, highlighting the big issues affecting Malaysians, said REA Group chief operating officer international Arthur Charlaftis in a statement.

"We've seen significant increases in the



cost of living in Malaysia, including price increases in fuel, tolls and public transport, as well as the introduction of the Goods

and Services Tax last year, which is having a significant impact on Malaysian families," said Charlaftis.

The survey results also demonstrated that Malaysians were hoping to see Budget 2017 provide more affordable housing schemes.

"Malaysia has a relatively young population and workforce, and there is strong demand for affordable residential properties in major urban centres. With transport costs also increasing, this young and growing segment of property seekers are looking for a property in the cities, often close to their workplace," he said.

According to the State of Households II Report published by the Khazanah Research Institute (KRI), Malaysia's median monthly household income in 2014 was RM4,585 while the average monthly income was RM6,141. This means the

average household looks to spend between RM200,000 and RM300,000 on a property.

REA Group chief economist Nerida Conisbee said there was demand for properties within that price range, and a real opportunity for the government to incentivise developers to build more of these types of properties.

"Residential properties priced at RM500,000 and above are only within the reach of households earning at least RM15,000 per month, which equates to six per cent of the Malaysian population," he said.

"The government could also look to other Asian countries where affordability has been an issue, such as Singapore or Hong Kong where they have intervened to provide more affordable housing." — Bernama