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Aid package, economic stimulus packages help people and economy survive during COVID-19 pandemic

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KUALA LUMPUR, July 29 – Eight aid and economic stimulus packages worth RM530 billion have been implemented since the COVID-19 pandemic hit the country, proving that the government listens and acts so that the people and the economy continue to survive in this challenging period.

Finance Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Abdul Aziz said all the packages were implemented to protect lives through three main focuses, namely strengthening the public health system and national vaccination programme, protecting the people and ensuring business continuity.

"It is most important now to intensify efforts to vaccinate at least 80 per cent of the adult population nationwide. I'm sure the people don't want to look back after being locked up for so long.

"Insyallah, this year, once and for all, we will end all grief," he said when giving a briefing on the economic assistance packages at Parliament today.

He said the national vaccination programme is the key to the country's success against COVID-19 through the

National COVID-19 Immunisation Programme (PICK).

Elaborating further, Tengku Zafrul said to optimise the capacity of the public health system, the Ministry of Health (MOH) was provided with a special allocation of more than RM3.7 billion specifically for expenditure related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

He said among others, the allocation through the PRIHATIN package amounted to RM1.6 billion, RM1.4 billion through Budget 2021 and an additional allocation of more than RM500 million under the PEMERKASA Plus package.

He said the government had also announced the largest cash assistance in the country's history through Bantuan Prihatin Nasional (BPN) amounting to RM18 billion which had benefitted 11 million recipients.

"The BPN assistance has given a lot of relief to the people and some even use it as capital for small businesses," he said, adding that the initiative was continued under the PEMULIH package through three other cash assistance programmes, namely Bantuan Prihatin Rakyat, Bantuan Khas COVID-19 and Bantuan Kehilangan Pendapatan.

Tengku Zafrul said the government had provided an allocation of more than RM200 million for the Food Basket assistance programme which had received many requests for such a programme to be continued.

He said the government also helped target groups such as youths, students, women and single mothers as well as job seekers and trainees.

According to him, under the PenjanaKerjaya 2.0 initiative, more than 141,000 people were successfully employed while more than 39,300 people got jobs through the Short Term Employment Programme (MySTEP) which offers salaries of between RM1,400 and RM2,000 a month as of June 30 last year.

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