

Senior citizens grateful for Sara aid

GEORGE TOWN: Disbursement of the Sumbangan Asas Rahmah (Sara) aid brings hope to those struggling with daily life, particularly individuals who no longer have a stable source of income.

For private sector retiree B. Letchumanan, 60, the aid comes in handy to cover the cost of daily necessities although some may view the amount as small.

He said his wife is a Sara recipient while his 85-year-old father was recently listed as a new beneficiary of the aid.

"Today, I came to buy personal hygiene items for my father as he has difficulty moving around due to knee pain.

"My father is 85 years old and a retired teacher. He lives with my family, so with the help of Sara, we can at least partially cover his expenses, especially since I am no longer working," he told Bernama when met at a recent Finance Ministry Sara Programme.

Letchumanan said the method of disbursing the aid by crediting it directly into the MyKad is very convenient as it can be used at any time, free from the hassle of additional technical procedures.

Meanwhile, Nur Aziah Bahari, 65, expressed her gratitude for being selected as a recipient of the RM100 aid, which she has used to purchase food items.

Admitting that she has been affected by the rising cost of living and has had to spend frugally, she said the assistance provided her with some relief in managing expenses, especially for daily essentials.

"This is the second time the money has been credited to my MyKad. It has been a great help in easing my burden as I care for a disabled child and my husband is also unwell," she said.

Yong Kok Choy, 75, also shared his gratitude for the aid, saying it reflects the government's concern for the welfare of the people burdened by current economic challenges.

He said the government initiative should be continued and expanded so that more people can benefit from it.

According to Deputy Finance Minister Lim Hui Ying, the government has increased the allocation for the Sumbangan Tunai Rahmah (STR) and Sara programmes to RM13 billion this year, making it the highest-ever cash aid allocation.

Penang accounts for 293,000 Sara recipients out of a total of 5.4 million recipients nationwide.

The Sara programme is an additional aid given to STR recipients categorised as poor or hardcore poor under the eKasih database.