

KERATAN AKHBAR

TARIKH : 18 JANUARI 2023
AKHBAR : THE SUN
MUKA SURAT : 9

Take care of our poor

LETTERS letters@thesundaily.com

Take care of our poor

I REFER to the article headlined "Welfare of poor top priority of unity govt, says PM" in *theSun* on Jan 13, where Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim declared the need for strong or good governance.

Critically, it focuses on needs-based policies and programmes. Hence, his administration must address the issues plaguing the poor, including helping them deal with the rising cost of living, gaining access to healthcare and education.

It is clear that the welfare of the poor is becoming a growing concern. A survey conducted by the Department of Statistics in 2020 found that 20% of households from the M40 group had fallen into the B40 category due to the repercussions from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The lower end of the M40 income earners are now the "new poor", with many battling financial woes and debts, especially those in urban areas due to the increasing cost of

living.

The International Monetary Fund recently concluded that the poor have been left further behind in many nations following the pandemic.

In Malaysia, the wealth gap between the "haves" and "have nots" have widen.

Government aid must, therefore, be methodically and appropriately directed towards this group. This assistance should include tax breaks for medical services, child care, and educational expenses, as well as related IT costs.

Cutting financial waste and leakages from public projects and government agencies may help finance the increase in social and welfare spending.

Failure to provide assistance will only serve to show our lack of compassion for the poor.

As Mahatma Gandhi said "true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members".

**Sze Loong Steve Ngeow
Kajang**