

### REDUCING BURDEN

## Cost of living hot topic on Budget 2018 site

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The cost of living appears to be the most popular topic under 14 categories on the Budget 2018 microsite online.

Under that category, easier access to home ownership and increased allowances for various groups were among the more popular suggestions offered by Malaysians.

“As you know, costs of living have increased. As a civil servant, I suggest service allowances to be increased,” read a post by Ravidasan.

Another Netizen, Richard Samie, posted a similar suggestion, saying that the salaries of civil servants should be increased by four per cent, parallel with current inflation rates.

“Housing allowances should be

increased by RM100. This is because renting and buying homes are expensive.

“Increases in housing allowance can help civil servants and simultaneously increase consumer power. When the people spend, the economy flourishes, and the country benefits,” he said.

Another contributor, named Haslina, asked that civil servants be given two months’ bonus.

“I empathise with civil servants who have not received any bonuses since 2013.

“I hope you (Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak) will award bonus incentives to help reduce the burden caused by increasing living costs,” she said.

For the Housing and Urban Liv-

ing category, Ahmad Mahir suggested creating a specialised bank for matters of housing financing with relevant mechanisms.

This, he said, would aid Malaysians who wished to purchase a house but had trouble doing so due to the lack of documents and eligibility with conventional banks.

“It could also solve the problem of excessive unsold properties.”

Alif Nazmi said the minimum wage should be increased from RM900 to RM1,500 a month, as salaries and costs of living, especially house costs, were unstable.

“Costs of property should be controlled, especially those in the city. An apartment costs up to RM250,000 and the minimum



*Easier access to home ownership and increased allowances for various groups were among the more popular suggestions offered by Malaysians on the Budget 2018 microsite. PIC BY HALIM SALLEH*

wage is extremely low.

“How much longer will the people live without their own houses if costs rise uncontrolled?”

For Healthcare, Leong suggested Budget 2018 go towards building children’s hospitals, as done in other countries.

“The hospital should cater to children’s healthcare, which is different from adults. It can use a more specialised approach to treatment, including the psychological aspect.

“The hospital can also be the centre for child surgery,” he said.

Earlier this month, Najib had invited suggestions for next year’s budget for 15 days, from Sept 4 to 18.

He praised the crowdsourcing campaign, saying a total of 13,837 ideas and suggestions were received, an increase from the 8,352 suggestions received for the 2017 Budget.

The tabling of Budget 2018 is expected to be held on Oct 27.