

Eight million households to be interviewed for census

By RAZAK AHMAD
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: The government will be asking Malaysia's eight million households for detailed information ranging from our age to income as it conducts its most extensive national census exercise next year.

With Malaysians increasingly concerned about how the government should spend public money amid rising worries about cost of living, jobs, affordable housing and other bread-and-butter issues, the

data gathered will guide the government's policies and programmes to address these matters.

"Information from the census helps determine how government funding worth billions of ringgit will be spent across the country.

"Information from the census will be used to make plans and decisions regarding the public services required for each locality such as hospitals, schools, roads, and public transport.

"Local authorities also use information from the census to help meet the core needs of their area,"

the Statistics Department, which carries out the census, said in its Population and Housing Census Malaysia 2020 website (<https://www.myecensus.gov.my>.)

The 2020 census will be carried out starting from July 7 to end August next year. (July 7 next year is Census Day).

It will be the sixth carried out in the country since the formation of Malaysia in 1963.

Previous census exercises were carried out roughly every 10 years, namely in 1970, 1980, 1991, 2000 and 2010.

Under the Census Act 1960, it is compulsory for Malaysians to take part and answer all questions on the Census.

According to the department, Malaysia now has a population of 32.6 million comprising eight million households living in 8.8 million living quarters.

A trial census exercise was carried out from July 24 to Aug 7 involving about 100,000 respondents in 20,000 households in selected areas nationwide.

Among the information collected in the trial census was on utilities,

public facilities, homeownership, farming activities and a specially developed module aimed at gathering more detailed information on the disabled and senior citizens.

The 2020 census will be conducted using five methods.

They are computer-assisted personal interviews; face-to-face interviews using a smartphone; a "Drop Off and Pick Up" method for respondents to fill out their own questionnaires; telephone interviews and an e-Census for respondents to fill out their own questionnaire forms online.

Not just about facts and figures

Census to focus on well-being and inclusivity

By LOH FOON FONG
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: The Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) will be moving away from just asking if a household has water and electricity to questions on the well-being and quality of life of households when it carries out the sixth population census next year, said Malaysia's chief statistician.

The questionnaire will also address in-depth the issue of inclusivity as compared to previous census.

That is because accurate information is needed for policymakers to come up with policies and programmes that drive the country towards a high-income nation, said Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin.

Mohd Uzir said that there will be questions on accessibility to amenities, recreational facilities, mode of transport from home to office and neighbourhood safety.

There are also questions on how regular Malaysians exercise, how often they talk to their family members and neighbours, he added.

"In the 1960s and 70s, it was about survival and we asked if a household had water and electricity.

"This time, the focus will be on the well-being of Malaysians.

"And it will also be more inclu-

sive," he said in an interview with *The Star*.

In terms of inclusivity, Mohd Uzir said that there will be special modules in the questionnaire for senior citizens (aged 60 and above) which asks about their well-being, and people with disabilities about their welfare and job opportunities.

"The census is for everyone. It has been inclusive all along in the past but the new census will be strengthened and the questions will be more comprehensive.

"These include for the elderly, disabled, youth and other social-economic profile/characteristics. There will also be questions on gender equality," he said.

It will also include more questions for the rural poor, Orang Asli, foreigners (undocumented included), the homeless and refugees, he added.

To ensure inclusivity in education, for instance, the questionnaires will also ask about the household's access to Internet services and connectivity and if they don't have their own, whether they have public Internet such as public hotspots, he said.

"That's because we want those in rural areas to have access to information and the last development on things.

"When there is accessibility, there is an opportunity for people to enhance their capabilities and knowledge," he said.

He said that the questionnaires are also aimed at getting information for policymakers and society as a whole to work towards achieving the five pillars of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships.

There will also be questions on the extent Malaysians were taking care of the environment such as whether they practise the 3Rs - reduce, reuse and recycle, he said.

Mohd Uzir said Malaysia has incorporated inclusivity and most of the SDGs for society and is seen as a benchmark for other countries and the questionnaires will reveal the gaps that need to be filled.

As the 12th Malaysia Plan welcomes high technology foreign direct investments, high and semi-skilled workers, it will also ask Malaysian households about their educational background and the jobs they get to address any mismatch, he said.

Besides demographics and population profiling, Mohd Uzir said that the key objective of census taking is also for the department to collect baseline statistics for policy formulation in the areas of economy, security, education and health.

The information collected will be translated for the policymakers to come up with programmes for the benefit of the people, he said.

Key facts about the Population and Housing Census Malaysia 2020

Next year's national census will be more comprehensive. It will include new questions to gauge our quality of life and find out what needs to be done for Malaysia to achieve a high-income nation status. The new questions include:

- What amenities and recreational facilities do you have access to?
- Do you have access to the Internet, and if not, where do you access the Internet?
- Do you feel that your neighbourhood is safe?
- What transportation do you take to get to work?
- How much time does your daily commute take?
- How often do you exercise?
- How often do you talk to your family members and neighbours?
- Do you practise the 3Rs - reduce, reuse and recycle?

Certain target groups will be asked more questions to find out how to improve their welfare and well-being, including:



Orang Asli



Senior citizens



The disabled



Homeless



Refugees



Undocumented foreigners



Youth



Women