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Muhyiddin (third left) and Rina (second left) looking at the food aid prepared by the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry. — Bernama photo

New RM21 million food aid fund

PUTRAJAYA: More aid is being provided to the people affected by Covid-19 with the introduction of a new initiative dubbed Bakul Prihatin Negara yesterday involving an initial fund of RM21 million.

The fund, RM16 million of which was raised from private companies and RM5 million allocated by the Prime Minister's Department, was aimed at benefitting 1.68 million people across the country.

Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin when met after checking out the preparations of food baskets at the Bakul Prihatin Negara collection and distribution centre at Dewan Perdana Nur of the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry (KPWKM) here yesterday, said the initiative would involve the see the distribution of 420,000 staple food baskets to 1.68 million recipients affected by Covid-19.

"We cannot compromise with anything in matters involving

people's wellbeing.

As long as the Covid-19 crisis is not over and the economy is not revived, I will remain concerned and feel responsible to ensure the wellbeing of the people in the country regardless of their background or where they are.

"We shall do over level best to help them," he said.

With the concept of "whole of society", the initiative involves the cooperation between the public and the private sector and is being coordinated by the KPWKM.

The idea for the Bakul Prihatin Negara programme was mooted by Muhyiddin himself as a proactive response to help cushion the impact of Covid-19 faced by the people.

The distribution of the food baskets was being done by the Prihatin Negara Squad volunteers managed by the Social Welfare Department.

Each basket contains staples worth RM50 including rice, salt and sugar, flour, vermicelli, soy

sauce, canned sardines, biscuits and coffee.

Muhyiddin said not including those under the Bakul Prihatin Negara programme, the government had distributed 2,315 million food baskets involving an allocation of RM173.4 million which had benefitted 9.26 million people since the first phase of the food basket assistance programme was launched in March last year.

"Most of the target groups, be it from the M40, B40 or the T20 households were affected by the pandemic as they may have lost their job, cannot run their business, so we give them aid," he said.

Malaysians in need of food basket assistance can apply by contacting Talian Kasih at 15999, the nearest Social Welfare office or by referring to the information available at the KPWKM social media platforms.

During the visit, Muhyiddin also received contributions totalling RM16 million from five

companies to ensure the success of the programme.

The companies are Yayasan Petronas, represented by Petronas Group president and chief executive officer (CEO) Tengku Muhammad Taufik Tengku Aziz, with a contribution of RM5 million; AEON Big, represented by CEO of AEON Group Malaysia Shafie Shamsuddin (RM4 million); Pharmaniaga Bhd, represented by its chairman Datuk Seri Mohammed Shazaili Ramly (RM3 million); Tenaga Nasional Bhd, represented by its president/CEO Datuk Ir Baharin Din (RM2 million); and Telekom Malaysia Bhd, represented by its chairman Tan Sri Mohd Bakke Salleh (RM2 million).

Muhyiddin also presented the Prihatin Negara Squad vests to two volunteers - Ahmad Azri Ahmad, 35, and Azalina Abdul Rahman, 44.

Also present was KPWKM Minister Datuk Seri Rina Mohd Harun. — Bernama