

7 ways to address cost of living

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One way to reduce the cost of doing business is by eliminating red tape. - FILE PIC

LETTERS: The 15th General Election has concluded and we now know the results, which had led to the formation of a unity government.

We commend the prime minister for immediately commencing work on tackling the issue of high cost of living.

We remain confident that the prime minister, supported by a dedicated team of experienced civil servants, will develop new strategies in tackling this issue that is impacting most people.

In that regard, we would like to put forward seven proposals as follows:

First, political stability was our key strength, which instilled great confidence among investors in making Malaysia a preferred investment hub. We hope that politicians will put the nation's interest above their own.

According to the Finance Ministry report, our nation's economy continued its recovery momentum, with its gross domestic product (GDP) for the second quarter of 2022 growing by 8.9 per cent, exceeding the 5.0 per cent recorded in the first quarter of 2022 and outperforming the economic performance of several developed and regional countries.

What is required now is that we sustain this growth and political stability is a key enabling factor. We hope that there is no change in government until its term expires.

Second, there must be a real commitment and strong political will to fight corruption.

Corruption deters investment, suffocates economic growth, undermines the rule of law and adds on cost which will unfairly be borne by consumers.

Third, the government must implement austerity measures focusing on plugging leakages and spend only on projects which will benefit the nation. There must be transparency in governance.

You cannot tell consumers to adjust their lifestyle to mitigate the high cost of living when the government itself continues to waste resources.

Fourth, the Malaysian Competition Commission must increase its market surveillance activity to weed out anti-competitive business practices. Monopolies must be dismantled.

Offenders must be prosecuted, and hefty fines imposed. Long term implementation of price controls must also be strategically reviewed as it directly stifles principles of free trade, limits innovation and growth strategies.

Instead, the government must identify critical economic sectors and formulate policies which will encourage greater participation and ultimately reduce dependency on a limited number of manufacturers or suppliers.

Efforts must be intensified to improve business efficiency by eliminating bureaucratic red tape, which significantly increases the cost of doing business.

Fifth, create economic opportunity. Malaysians are hardworking people who are willing to seize any business opportunity to improve their household income.

The government must, therefore, focus to develop and implement policies capable of expanding opportunities to every Malaysian willing to work to uplift themselves economically.

Sixth, be prudent in consumption. As consumers, we must re-examine our own consumption patterns and adjust where necessary in prioritising our needs over wants.

We must equip ourselves to face expected economic turbulence next year where principles of prudent financial management will come in handy.

Avoid wastage and overconsumption, where we purchase things not to fulfil our basic needs but to make some social statement about ourselves.

Seventh, support enforcement. Although supported by only a limited enforcement strength the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs has done well in monitoring, tracking and acting against businesses which engage in unethical business practices and by manipulating market dynamics.

Consumers can help too. In this era of social media, we are empowered to highlight issues in real time and ensure they are addressed immediately.

Name and shame those manipulating the system through social media while sharing accurate information with the enforcement team for strategic action.

It is an opportunity now for all of us to close ranks and propel this great nation forward. We are responsible for our own success or failure.

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