

# Youth group calls for RM2,000 minimum wage

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Khairul Azlan says the current minimum wage is no longer viable.

THE government is urged to conduct a feasibility study on increasing the current minimum wage from RM1,500 to at least RM2,000 to help Malaysians cope with the rising cost of living.

Gerakan Belia 4B Malaysia (Johor) chairman Khairul Azlan Sulong said there was a huge gap between the price of necessities and the earnings of the public, especially those who worked in the general sector.

“The majority of B40 families are general workers, including cleaners, restaurant workers, cashiers and others who generally receive a monthly salary of RM1,200 or RM1,500.

“This salary against the current cost of living is no longer viable, even more so if the individual is the sole breadwinner in the family.

“There should be at least a study conducted by the government to evaluate the possibility of increasing the minimum wage,” he added.

He said this when asked to comment on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim’s statement on raising the salaries of civil servants through the second Madani Budget that will be tabled in Parliament next month.

Khairul Azlan said the move was reasonable as a large number of civil servants earned a basic salary less than RM2,000.

“With the rakyat having more money, it would help boost our domestic economy when they spend more on locally produced goods,” he added.

Johor Youth Council deputy president Mohammad Alif A Rahim concurred, saying that the government should also look into the current performance of local micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

“The worldwide economy depends entirely on MSME performance as an indicator of public spending by civil servants and those in the private sector,” he said.

He also urged the government to review the current economic plan and shift focus to the agricultural sector to ensure food security and reduce demand for imports.

“We need more entrepreneurs in the agricultural sectors to avoid any monopoly on produce, thus creating control on the market, especially for fertilisers, farm feeds and pesticides,” he said.

Earlier, Anwar was reported saying that a slight raise in salaries of civil servants was a temporary measure until a comprehensive study on the salary and retirement scheme for civil servants could be completed next year.

He said it had been the government’s policy to review the salary scheme for civil servants every 10 years and this should have been done two years ago.

However, he said the previous government did not look into the matter and no meetings on it were ever held.