

SSM to distribute zakat to students from B40 households next year



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by NUR HAZIQAH A MALEK/ pic by ARIF KARTONO

COMPANIES Commission of Malaysia (SSM), an agency under the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP) is expected to begin zakat distribution for students in need next year.

KPDNHEP Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail (*picture; right*) said he had proposed a few changes to the agency's future distributions implementation.

"We have identified a number of students coming from a low income household (B40) that are now experiencing the benefits of the food bank programme.

"Now if we provide further aid to them such as zakat, we can definitely reduce their financial burden significantly, and with that — they can focus on their studies even better," he said at the Mahabbah Food Bank (MFB) programme launch at the International Islamic University (IIUM) in Selangor yesterday.

He added that the main beneficiary of the zakat should be students regardless of their achievements.

"More details will be discussed further — currently we have established that around 6,470 students benefit from the MFB programme.

"However, we will need to look into the available funds, as well as how big the agency's responsibility should be and how much can be distributed, on top of the beneficiaries' details," he added.

According to Saifuddin Nasution, IIUM is the 20th university to receive the food bank programme from the ministry, as the pilot programme was launched in Penang in August last year.

“The success of the pilot project has been set as the benchmark for other states such as Kelantan, Melaka, Johor Perak, Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Negri Sembilan.

“The programme was also launched officially in the national levels on Dec 22, 2018, at Penyayang Complex, Penang. Up until October 2019, as many as 418,000 households have benefitted from this programme,” said Saifuddin Nasution.

Similarly, the programme has also saved as much as 1,893 metric tonnes of food leftovers.

According to Saifuddin Nasution, the ministry via Food Bank Foundation Malaysia has taken the initiative to contact industry players not only involved in supermarkets, but also distributors, restaurants and hotels to channel food for the programme.

“The ministry is also working towards expanding the Food Bank for Students to public universities nationwide,” he said.

Among the players involved in channelling the food for the programme to IIUM include 99 Speed Mart Sdn Bhd, Mighty Ocean Sdn Bhd, Big Supermart Sdn Bhd and Mesra Erat Sdn Bhd.

Under IIUM, around 200 students have been identified to be eligible to receive the aid, while the food bank will be mobilised by the student representative council under the concept of Food Pantry.

On Oct 11, about RM25 million was allocated for the organisation, operation and expansion of the food bank programme throughout the nation under Budget 2020.

