

RM100 Sara aid: Millions can buy essential items from tomorrow

PARTICIPATING retailers have made preparations for an influx of shoppers.

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NSTP PIC BY MOHAMAD SHAHRIL BADRI SAALI

OPTION TO USE OR DONATE

MILLIONS TO REDEEM RM100 SARA AID

Participating outlets have restocked essentials, updated payment systems for programme starting tomorrow

FARAH AINA AND LIM XIN YOU
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

MILLIONS of Malaysians are expected to start using their RM100 Sumbangan Asas Rahmah (Sara) cash aid from tomorrow, with business outlets bracing for a wave of shoppers using it to ease their living costs.

The cash aid, given to every adult citizen, was among a range of measures announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in July.

The measures also included a freeze on toll hikes at 10 highways this year, and a six sen per litre reduction in RON95 price.

Under the Sara scheme, grocers will deduct payment for the purchased items from the RM100 credited into the recipient's MyKad.

About 22 million citizens aged 18 and above received the cash aid, which can be used to buy essential items from participating stores such as 99 Speedmart, Hero Market, Giant and Mydin until Dec 31.

They can also be used at participating neighbourhood shops.

Checks by the *New Straits Times* showed that these establishments had already restocked essential

13 APPROVED CATEGORIES OF GOODS

- Rice
- Eggs
- Cooking Oil
- Flour
- Bread
- Biscuits
- Instant Noodles
- Beverages
- Condiments
(Examples: Sauce, soy sauce, sugar, salt)
- Canned Food
(Examples: Sardines, tuna, baked beans)
- Personal Hygiene Products
(Examples: Toothpaste, liquid body wash, sanitary pads)
- Medicines
(as approved by the Health Ministry)
- School Supplies
(Examples: School uniforms, shoes, school bags, stationery)



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goods and recalibrated their payment systems to ensure there would not be any glitches.

Mydin has gone a step further by introducing "Kotak Sara Rahmah" — pre-packed boxes of daily essentials worth RM100.

Mydin managing director Datuk Ameer Ali Mydin said the idea came from his understanding that some recipients, especially those from higher-income groups, might prefer to "donate" their allocation instead.

The Kotak Sara Rahmah provides an easy way for them to channel the aid directly to those in need.

It includes staple items such as



Notifications on the RM100 Sumbangan Asas Rahmah (Sara) cash aid have been put up at Giant Setapak, Kuala Lumpur, in preparation for its launch tomorrow. NSTP PIC BY MOHAMAD SHAHRIL BADRI SAALI

rice, flour, sugar, noodles, coffee and condiments, many of which are sourced from local businesses.

"Most products are from small and medium enterprises rather than multinational brands. This way, not only do recipients benefit, but local producers also gain support," Ameer said.

"To make things clearer, we are also putting special 'MyKasih' stickers on eligible products.

"Many people think only rice, sugar and flour are included, but in fact, a wide range of food, even school uniforms, can be bought under the programme."

Customers who do not need the RM100 cash aid can either purchase a box and give it to a recipient of their choice, or allow Mydin to hand it over to the Social Welfare Department, which will then distribute it to underprivileged families.

Housewife Sarojini Devi from Penang has taken up Mydin's offer, saying she and her husband would donate their boxes to an old folks' home.

"We have lived our lives with enough. This aid should bring comfort to those left behind in their twilight years," she said.

For companies keen to contribute, Mydin offers a bulk order option.

Instead of staff travelling to stores, Mydin can also deliver the Kotak Sara Rahmah directly to workplaces, making it easier for employees to take part in the programme.

Despite anticipating a heavier flow of customers at the start of the programme, Ameer assured the public that supply was sufficient and urged recipients not to rush during the first week.

"You have four months to use

the RM100, so there's no need to crowd the outlets immediately," he said.

Similarly, 99 Speedmart, Hero Market and Giant Mart have also recalibrated their systems.

Nurul Akhmal, 35, an employee at a 99 Speedmart outlet, said the products would be restocked regularly.

Mesran Alias, 26, who works at a Hero Market store, said a list of the items that customers could purchase had been put up at the entrance.

Staff at a Giant hypermarket said they have been trained to handle the Sara crowd, similar to the previous MyKasih scheme.

The Finance Ministry has said any unused Sara balance at the end of the year would be reallocated to vulnerable groups through government programmes to be determined later.