

## SMEs hope to get more govt assistance for survival of business

By ILI AQLAH  
iliaqilah@thestar.com.my

SMALL and medium enterprise (SME) owners feel that the government should provide more allocations to help them recover from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Those interviewed by *StarMetro* said the special announcement on Malaysian Economic and Rakyat's Protection Assistance Package (Permai) would help some businesses survive but believed more could be done to cushion the blow.

Executive director Khairul Aman Hashim, 41, said Permai showed that the government was ready to help SMEs, especially those in the movement control

order areas.

"It is hard to say if the package is enough to help SMEs sustain their business but it does show the government's willingness to help.

"Although not everyone will receive the benefit directly, initiatives such as the ability to withdraw from one's Employees Provident Fund will definitely boost the economy," he said.

He added that although the announcement provided some relief to SME owners, there was still room for improvement.

"Many SMEs, especially those in tourism, catering, wedding and event management, have been badly affected by the MCO.

"Therefore, I hope that a bigger allocation will be given to SMEs so

that they can digitalise their business, as many have not realised the benefit of building an online platform for their business.

"The government can also offer guidance on promoting the digitalisation of SMEs not only during MCO, but also in the future," he added.

In his announcement on Permai, Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said the government would ensure business continuity was among its main objectives.

A business owner, who wished to be known as Yen Le, said more could be done by the government to help SMEs during the pandemic.

"There are many steps involved in applying for a loan or grant and these procedures often take time,"

she said.

Yen Le suggested that instead of offering bank loans, there should be special tax deductions for SMEs.

"Three years ago, I applied for a business grant and the entire process took about two years.

"Many documents and letters need to be provided and it is time consuming.

"It would be better for the government to offer us a tax deduction instead," she said.

She added that many SMEs were struggling during this period and had to take on loans to stay afloat.

"Taking on more loans will not solve the problem. Tax deductions will be beneficial as it will keep our business alive."



Khairul hopes that a bigger allocation will be given to SMEs.