

# Tok Pa: Govt cautious on 12MP allocations

By **ASHLEY TANG**

ashleytang@thestar.com.my

**PETALING JAYA:** The government is being extra careful when considering allocations for the 12th Malaysia Plan 2021-2025 (12MP) as its priority is on tackling the Covid-19 pandemic, says Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed.

The Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economic Affairs) said the government had received submissions amounting to RM900bil in requests from all ministries and state governments.

"That is a big sum. This year we allocated RM69bil (for the development expenditure in Budget 2021), one of the highest in recent years in terms of annual allocation.

"But, our priority now is the Covid-19 pandemic.

"A lot of resources has been directed to the healthcare sector for understandable reasons as lives are very important.

"For vaccines alone, a big sum has been allocated and that is the priority at the moment," he told a press conference at Sunway University yesterday.

Mustapa added that the government's second priority was in



## Engaging the stakeholders:

Mustapa speaking to the press at Sunway University. With him is Cheah.

ensuring all Malaysians had food on the table.

The allocation for Budget 2021 is RM322.5bil, the largest on record for the country.

In tabling the Budget in Parliament last year, Finance Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Abdul Aziz said RM236.5bil had been allocated as administration expenditure, RM69bil for development and RM17bil to deal with the pandemic.

Mustapa was at Sunway University to attend a meeting with Sunway Group founder and chair-

man Tan Sri Dr Jeffrey Cheah on promoting closer cooperation between the public and private sectors, including discussions on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Sunway University hosts the Jeffrey Sachs Centre on Sustainable Development with the support of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, a regional centre of excellence that advances SDG achievement in Malaysia and South-East Asia.

Separately, Mustapa also urged Malaysians to be fair and balanced

in making any assessment on the economy amidst criticisms that the Emergency Ordinance is affecting foreign direct investment (FDI) into the country.

He said there were downsides and upsides on the economy in any country.

"As the government, we acknowledge that, and we have challenges as well.

"There are also upsides to this where we have been doing well in some areas," he added.

During the press conference, Cheah said that FDI would come back into the country as foreigners liked the diversity and the education system in Malaysia.

He added that the Sunway group would soon make an announcement on a huge investment that a foreign sovereign fund will make in Malaysia.

Cheah also said that Sunway would be making an additional contribution in advancing the SDGs.

"Over the last five years, the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation has funded US\$10mil (RM41.41mil) to the SDGs here in Sunway University.

"Starting from this year, we have committed another US\$10mil over the next five years," he added.