

ASIA-PACIFIC SOCIAL PROTECTION WEEK 2026

Empowered Lives, Resilient Futures

6–8 October • ADB Headquarters, Manila



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The case for a “red button”

Ugo Gentilini
Lead Economist, World Bank Group



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SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS IN ASIA

Economic Staff Paper
Number 60

James C. Knowles, Ernesto M. Pernia, and Mary Racelis

November 1999

ENHANCING SOCIAL PROTECTION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE REGIONAL WORKSHOP

EDITED BY
SRI WENING HANDAYANI

Asian Development Bank

THE SOCIAL PROTECTION INDICATOR FOR ASIA

TRACKING DEVELOPMENTS
IN SOCIAL PROTECTION

DECEMBER 2022

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

SEPTEMBER 2026

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK



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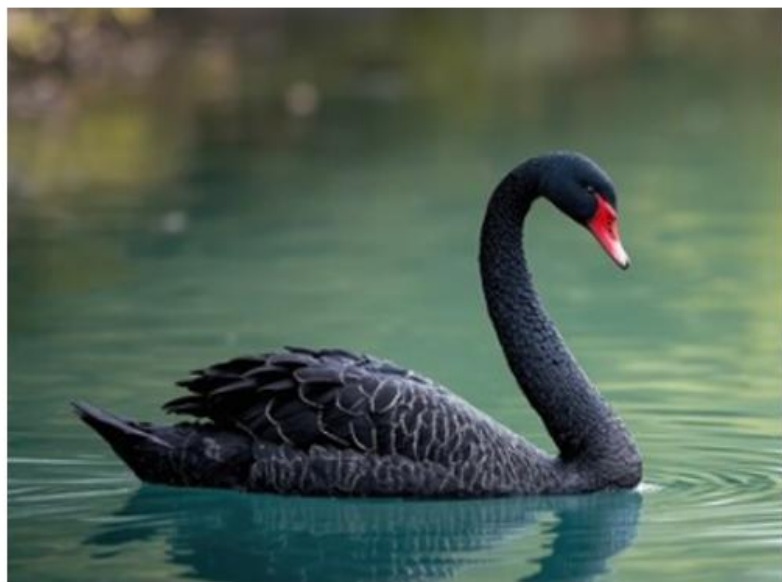
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High
uncertainty



High
impact



e.g., pandemics, financial crises, energy shocks... (AI?)



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Black Swan crises are hitting more frequently

Number of times oil prices reached “black swan” shock levels

(Brent futures >\$120/barrel)



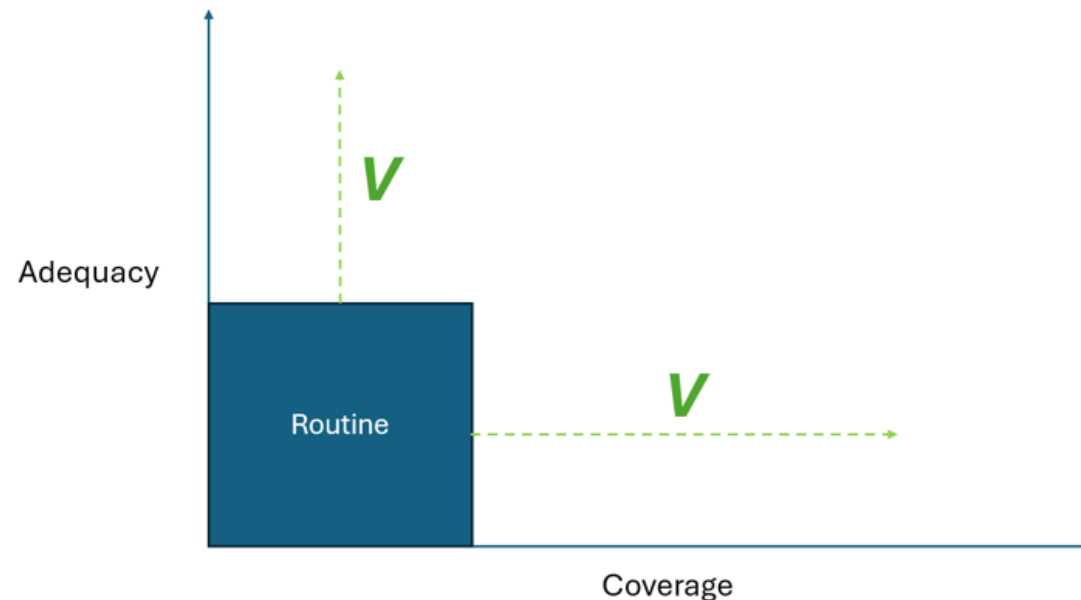


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How should immediate responses look like?

Top-priority recommendation: “scale up what exists”



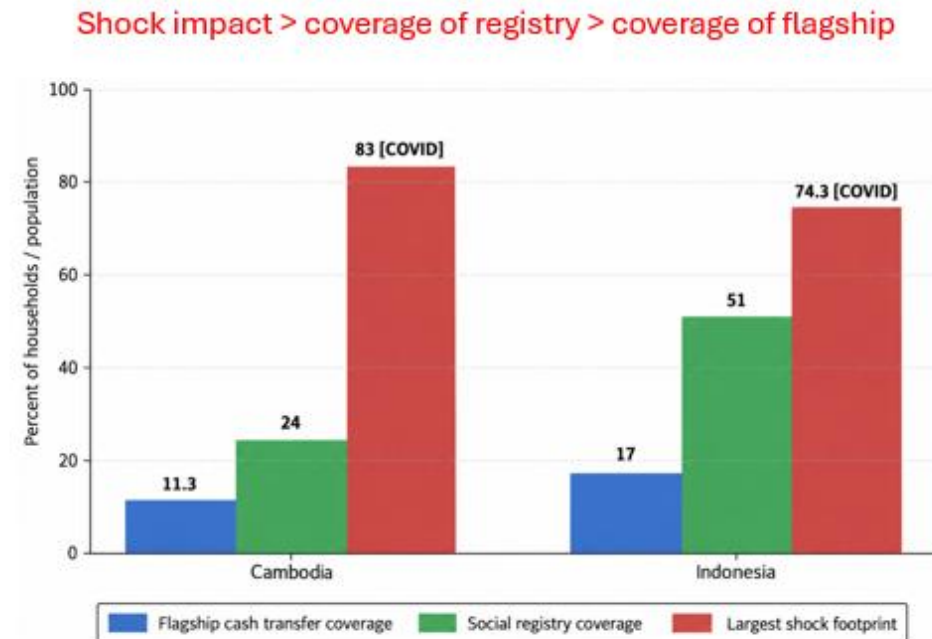
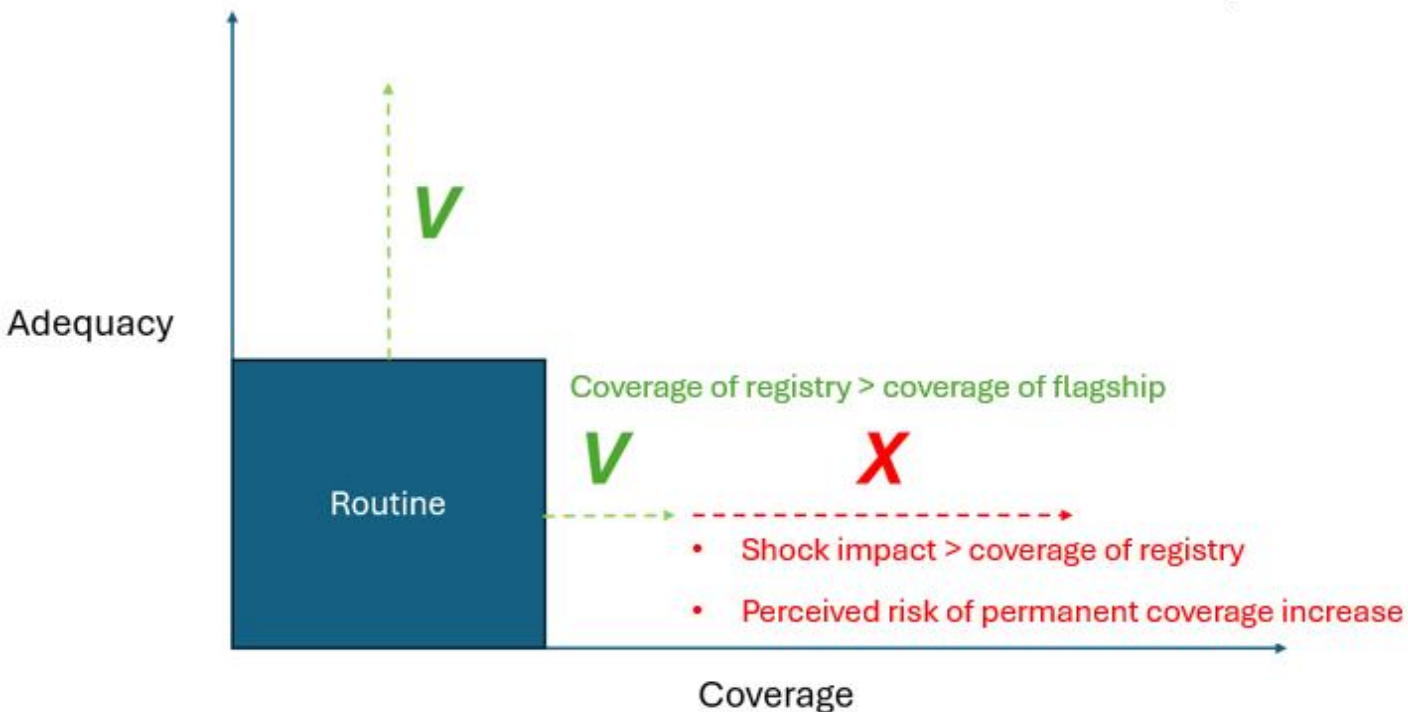


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But how far can existing programs flex?

In practice...



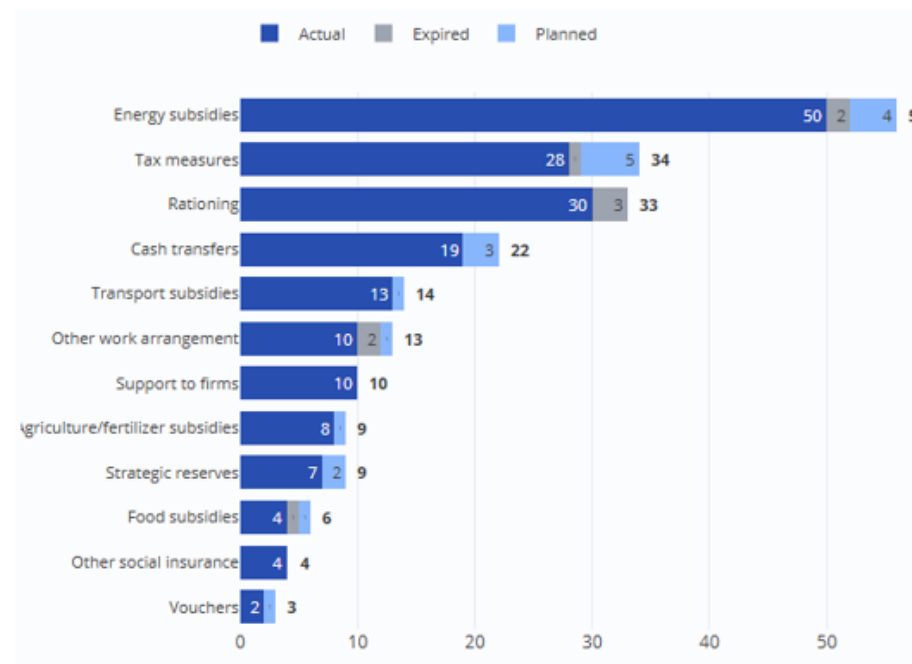
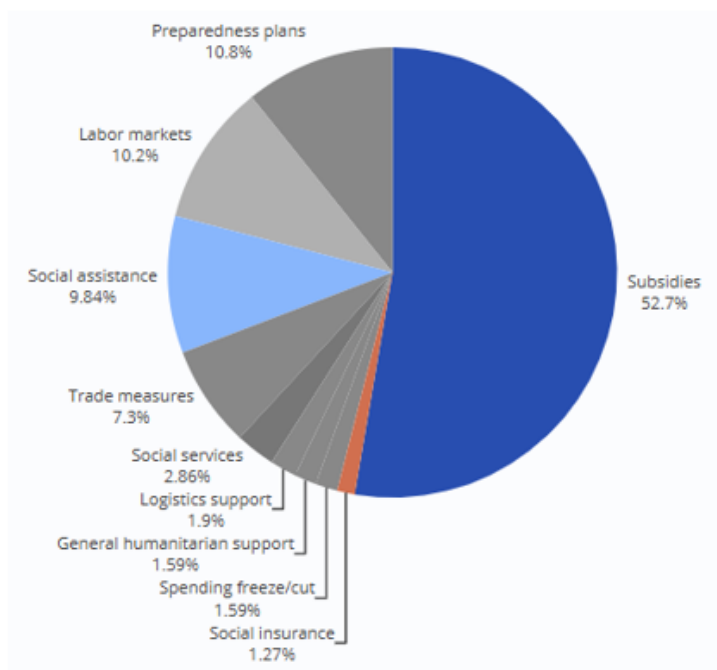


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How do countries fill the coverage gap?

1. Expand existing *subsidies*





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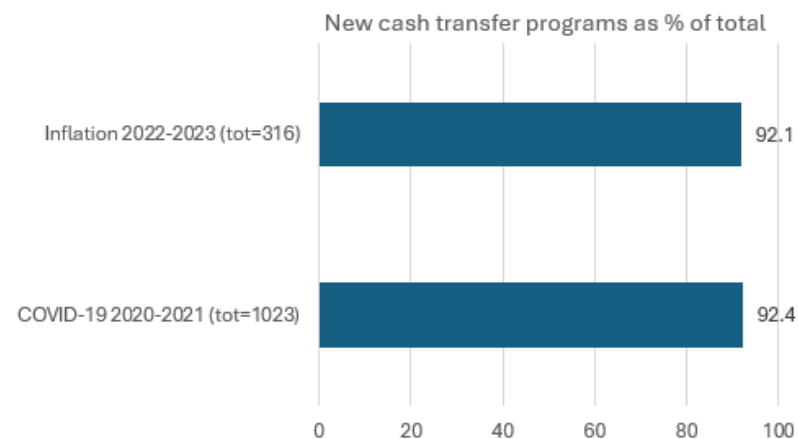
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How do countries fill the coverage gap?

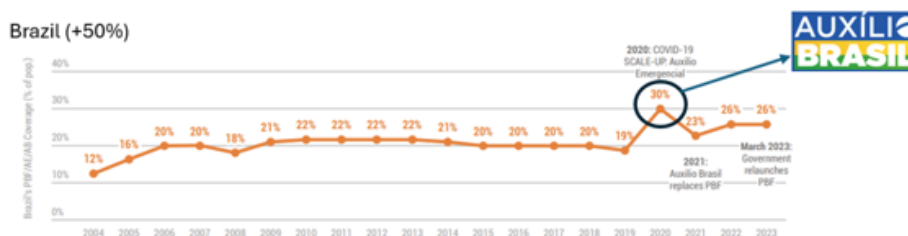
2. Introduce *new* programs *on-the-spot*

2020-2023:

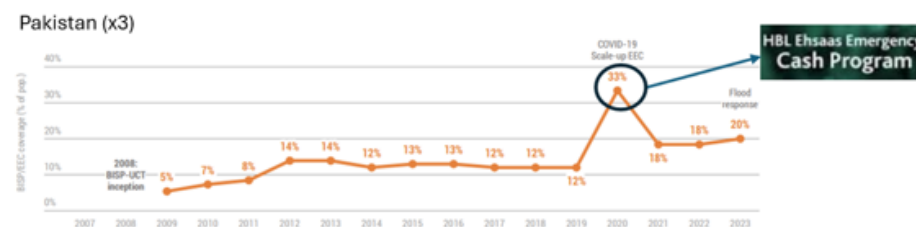
Over 90% of recent crisis responses were **new** programs (1300+)...



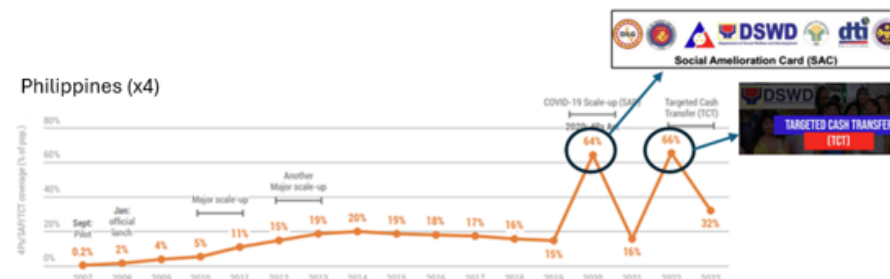
Brazil (+50%)



Pakistan (x3)



Philippines (x4)



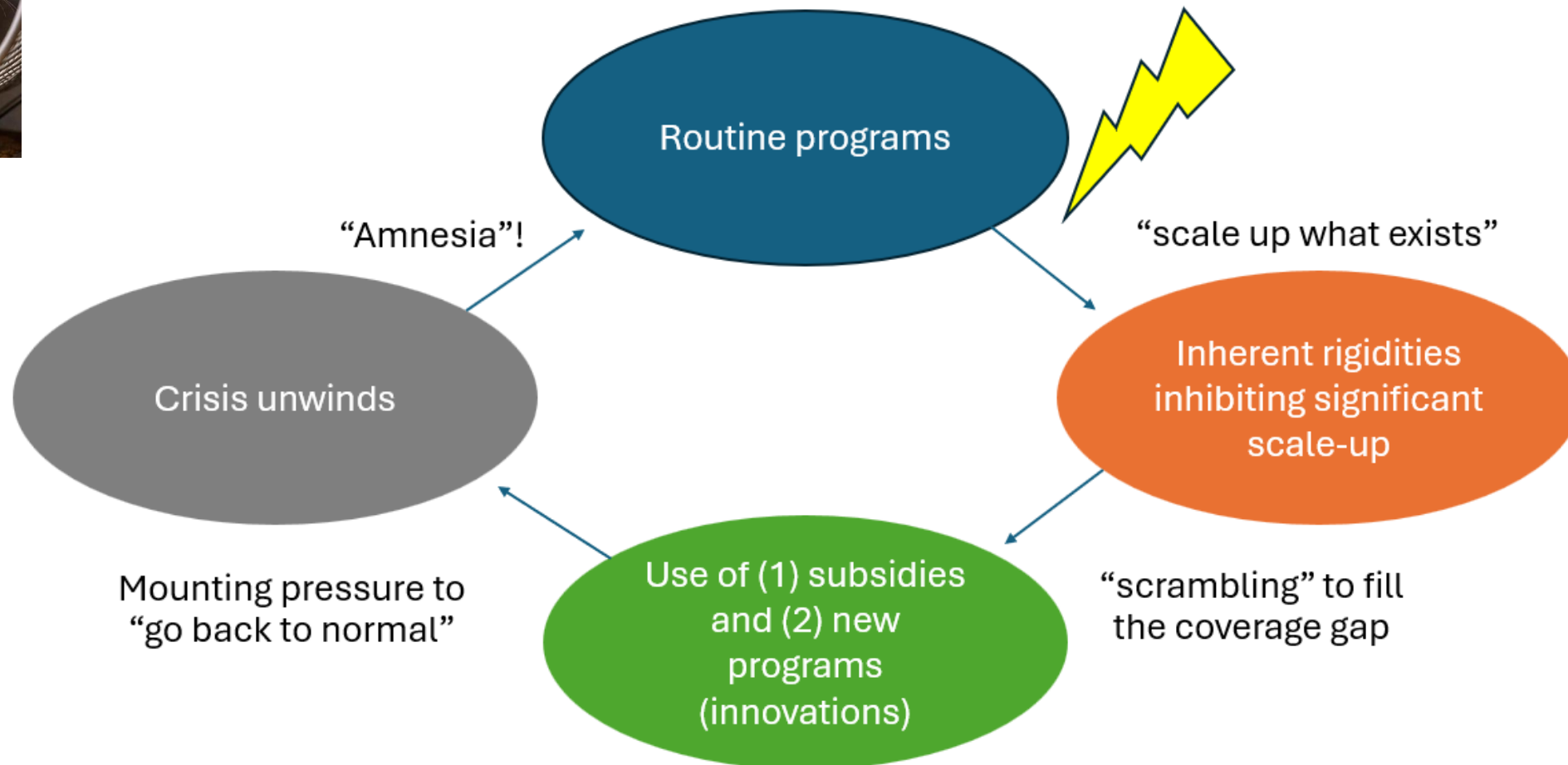


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Crisis cycle





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Where do we go from here?

Big new agenda:

Integrating the management of Black Swans into social protection crisis resilience toolkits



- **Keep investing in flagship program scalability, but with realistic expectations**
 - Horizontal scale-up still key for many more predictable/less impactful crises



- **Calibrate an optimal coverage of registries**
 - Match coverage and country risk profile, weigh high reach vs maintenance requirements



- **Consider a “red-button” option:** instead of developing a new program **during** crises (efficiency costs), institutionalize the mechanism upfront and within existing national data systems
 - Branded as special, broad/inclusive, temporary and with credible scale-down
 - Closely coordinated with monetary authorities in cases of inflation



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Signs that Asia & Pacific could lead the global course...

Near-universal pandemic responses (2022)...



... with continuity in other crises
(energy responses, 2026)

About CDC Vouchers Scheme 2026 (June)



... and with wider applications
(AI mitigation/dividend, 2027)

Universal NT\$10,000 cash handout to be included in 2027 budget: Lai

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