

PM: 1M'sia affordable housing for KL soon
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak today put in his maiden appearance at a Chinese radio station, addressing two major issues affecting urban Chinese youth - housing and education.

The premier told One FM's 'Morning Kaki' programme that the Perumahan Rakyat 1Malaysia (Prima) scheme would be announced next month to provide quality housing in land-scarce Kuala Lumpur.

He said that a portion of what is now the Sungai Besi airport would be used for Prima, at a price of RM220,000 or less for those under the age of 35.

The Sungai Besi airport has been bought over by government-owned 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) which aims to develop the area as an international financial hub dubbed the Kuala Lumpur International Financial District.

Costs would be kept low, he said, because the government would be providing the land, with the developers adopting what he calls a non-profit orientated "social business model".

"These big companies can join in. The government can provide some (funding facilities), depending on the business model they propose.

"The idea is that these developers do not make money, nor do I want them to lose. It will be a kind of social business model," said the premier.

PSD grants revamp

Later, Najib took one call from a listener who wanted to know how the government allocates scholarships for student aces, which did not receive a direct answer.

Instead, Najib said a review of the Public Service Department (PSD) scholarships was underway and the new system would be introduced next year.

Providing university grants for high achievers for Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) was "not a good idea," he said, as it does not guarantee that the same students would perform well for pre-university examinations such as the A-levels.

Instead, the new system would only provide scholarships for those who have been accepted to a yet-to-be-determined list of top universities, while SPM aces would be given "a small bursary".

However, he cautioned that this does not mean all high achievers would secure grants to study overseas as local universities require bright students as well, which will, among other factors, help boost national rankings.

"We don't want to send top students abroad. It is a contradiction in terms of what we want to achieve. These are the factors that we need to take on board when we work out the new policy next year," he said.

Najib doesn't play Angry Birds

Najib's One FM spot is his second radio station appearance since May, when he did a similar breakfast show interview on Malay station Hot FM.

He is speculated to appear on English station Fly FM soon, to cap off his radio breakfast show blitz.

The two important policy announcements made on the 'Morning Kaki' programme demonstrate a degree

of planning in his appearance.

A third current affairs topic was discussed, with Najib providing more details on the the launch of the 1Malaysia retail outlet aimed at providing basic goods to the urban poor at a discount.

The interview was conducted in English with DJ Jack and Jane providing translations or additional commentaries in a mix of Mandarin and Cantonese.

Najib's Mandarin-fluent youngest son Norashman was also in the studio, speaking about his relationship with his father.

On a lighter note, the radio deejays asked Najib if he had had a go at video game hit Angry Birds. With a negative reply, Najib instead revealed his preference for Hangman.

"I would like to try (Angry Birds) one day. It is popular among the youths, although I'm not part of that generation," he said.

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