

**Najib peppers budget speech with potshots**  
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**By Kuek Ser Kuang Keng**

In between statistics and serious policy pronouncements, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's Budget 2012 speech today was also peppered with numerous comparisons between BN and Pakatan Rakyat.

Howls from the opposition bench began as soon as Najib entered the Dewan Rakyat only to discover that his deputy was wearing the same maroon coloured baju melayu.

NONENot long after beginning his speech, Najib threw subtle jabs at Pakatan, accusing them of making empty promises while the incumbent government was one responsible for the country's successes thus far.

"This is not a government that makes empty promises but a responsible government which always places the interest of the people above all and carries out policies for the benefit of the people and well-being of the nation," he said.

Najib, who is delivering his third Budget speech, will for the first time have his speech contrasted with an Shadow Budget, revealed by Pakatan on Wednesday.

'Welfare state is BN's idea'

On the topic of subsidies, Najib fired another salvo, this time training his sights on PAS' welfare state campaign.

"Recently, there are groups trying to promote the concept of a welfare state. We congratulate them, as they are now finally aware of this concept.

"However, the (BN) government has long implemented various programmes to safeguard the rakyat's welfare," said a beaming Najib, to hoots of disapproval from the opposition bench..

Najib took another snipe at Pakatan when he announced a special RM3,000 one-off payments to former special constables and auxiliary police personnel, or their widows and widowers, who served during the communist insurgency period.

"The BN government is grateful, we will not at any point belittle the contribution of the ex-servicemen... their blood and tears..." he said.

This remark was clearly directed at PAS, whose deputy president Mohamad Sabu, or more popularly known as Mat Sabu, who is being charged with criminal defamation for questioning the official account of the Bukit Kepong incident.

Pakatan waves Buku Jingga

Najib also dismissed Pakatan's frequent allegations that BN was only interested in lavish, and unnecessary, multi-billion 'mega projects', stressing that his government was keen on small rural development projects as well.

"Is it not recorded in history that the Alliance Government was responsible for the establishment of the Ministry of National and Rural Development 50 years ago and pioneered a systematic development of rural areas?" he asked.

Last year, Najib's Budget speech included the announcement on plans to build the 100-story Warisan Merdeka tower project which drew widespread condemnation.

Before ending his two-hour speech, Najib made several dramatic pauses when announcing a proposal to raise the allowances of MPs, giving opportunity for his backbenchers to cheer and and the opposition bench to howl in disagreement.

Throughout Najib's speech, Pakatan MPs had intermittently waved copies of the coalition's Alternative Budget, which they term is the Buku Jingga or Orang Booklet.

But the coalition's MPs all waved the booklet nearly simultaneously when Najib said that a special one-off payment would be made to households earning RM3,000 and below.

This was because they felt that Najib had literally took a page out of their book.

Pakatan MPs again waved the booklet when Najib completed his speech, in a symbolic move to show that many of their ideas had been incorporated in the Budget speech.

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