

Budget 2012 handouts must be managed properly

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By and large the 2012 budget is laudable and something to cheer about, but the government must see that the funds are quickly discharged to the relevant bodies, parties or ministries to allow them to implement the projects without delay.

Most importantly, to see that all recipients spend the money given to them as follows:

- * For deserving and genuine and useful projects only
- * To put a plug to malpractices, to stop wasteful spending and to see that nobody gets to siphon money for other purposes
- * To do not wait until the last minute to use up all the money/funds by simply spending on anything that comes to mind – to avoid having to refund the money back to the government

Furthermore, for example on education, by abolishing payments for insurance premium for students from 2012 onwards, does it mean that there will not be any more insurance cover or protection for students who may meet with an accident or suffer injuries and other untoward incidences in 2012?

Who should the student lodge the accident or body injury claim to or will the government undertake the liability to pay the student when no one is responsible, in this case? In fact, most parents see that there is a need to take insurance coverage from the school for students via a master plan policy, like it has been so for years.

Apparently, parents only need to pay a negligible amount like RM10 or 20 per annum, to get this insurance protection. In the event of an accident, the parents do not have to pay a single cent for the student's medical treatments and care, surgery and hospitalisation, as all these expenses will be taken care of by the insurance company. Therefore, it is a relief for parents when the student is fully covered by an insurance policy.

Please elaborate what is really meant when it was announced during budget day that the insurance premium for students will be abolished in 2012?

And while the rakyat welcome the extension of the retirement age from 58 to 60 years old, does it however mean EPF contributors can only withdraw their savings in full when they are 60 years old and not as it is now at 55?

It should be alright if the contributor is given an option to whether to take out all their savings at 55 years old. Besides this, the employee should also be given the option to continue to work or retire, when reaching 55, and to open a new EPF account or otherwise - let alone allowed to work without having to make any more payments to EPF until 60.

For college/university students, it is good to know that the government is giving each a RM200 voucher to let them buy books on a one off basis though it's not much to brag about. It may help ease the financial burden of some parents in a way. But why is the government not giving anything to students studying in universities abroad – they too look forward to be given some goodies by the government.

So, again this segment has been marginalised and this sort of treatment sends out the ripples of discrimination and adverse repercussions in their thoughts and mindset - so it will be difficult to get them back to serve the nation later - or rather after they graduated.

Like it or not, senior citizens in Malaysia are the losing lot all the time when budget day comes around every year. This time around it is not unusual because there were no handout of goodies to senior citizens or retirees from the private sectors, who had contributed a lot to nation building and in taxes during their hey-days.

They (senior citizens) too needed to be given some goodies for their contributions - nothing like given free medical care and treatment at all government hospitals and health centres as well as a one off cash handout - let alone being left out again.

The question is why is it that only pensioners are given bonuses during festive seasons and cash handouts on budget day?

This discrimination of retirees is not in line with the 1Malaysia concept. In fact, the rakyat reckons that every Malaysian should be given a one off cash token of say RM500 to make the budget looking fairer and just.

Finally, on the government giving incentives to lure foreign investments to Malaysia it is certainly going to be a tough job especially during present times of economic uncertainties in Europe, America and other nations, when most investors are going on an austerity drive and will only invest overseas when better times are back.

If they are not careful, they too will go bankrupt. In view of this, it will be much cheaper, safer and better for our government to do something concrete to help keep all existing foreign investors and multinational companies here with more tax rebates and other goodies instead.

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