

PM: If S'pore can give cash aid, why can't M'sia?

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has defended his 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M) cash handouts, saying Singapore does the same too.

"If Singapore can give cash aid, why can't Malaysia also give out BR1M?."

"It's not just about skyscrapers and highways. Those in the rural areas, they need our help too," Najib was quoted as saying by The Malay Mail Online.

He was speaking at the Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah triennial conference in Kota Kinabalu today.

The prime minister was referring to the cash-relief given by the Singaporean government to those who make compulsory and voluntary contributions to their Central Provident Fund (CPF) accounts.

Bernama reported Najib as saying that BR1M is also proof of the government's concern for the welfare of lower- and middle-income groups.

As such, he said, it was not fair to question BR1M, and said it was unnecessary.

"When we give BR1M to the people, the people benefit. (We) must also have confidence in allowing the people to spend for their own well-being and the recipients of BR1M to spend it prudently," he said, according to the news agency.

In Budget 2016, the government raised BR1M handouts by RM50.

This means households earning less than RM3,000 will receive RM1,000, up from RM950 before, while those earning between RM3,001 and RM4,000 will receive RM800, from RM750 previously.

Meanwhile individuals below 21 earning less than RM2,000 will receive RM400.

Najib has also created a new category for those earning less than RM1,000 a month, who would now receive RM1,050 in aid.

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