

**PAS: Najib's budget remark sounds nice, but not convincing**

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak may not be able to convince Malaysians in saying that the government wants to [extend as much assistance and benefits](#) to the people in the 2017 Budget, says Islamic party PAS.

"His statement sounded nice, but it is hard for the people to believe it," PAS deputy president Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man said today.

Besides the weak ringgit and Petronas, which is bracing itself for challenging period, Tuan Ibrahim said the country is threatened with systemic corruption under Umno's rule.

He said this based on the corruption in the Sabah Water Department, which saw RM114.5 million in cash and assets being confiscated.

Many parties also described the arrest of two top officials of the department as 'small fish', he said.

"Imagine how much money we could recover if the sharks are arrested," he said in a statement.

Tuan Ibrahim added: "The seriousness of the prime minister in monitoring the budget can only be assessed by (his) efforts in controlling the budget of Prime Minister's Department (JPM).

"(However,) JPM's allocation has been increased from RM13 billion in 2012 to RM20 billion in 2016. It is expected to further expand in 2017.

"The sad part is that while JPM's allocations continue to grow, the education budget for the people has been slashed."

Najib, who is due to table the 2017 Budget in the Dewan Rakyat on Oct 21, should allocate accurately the funds needed for each sector, to enhance employment in various industries, he said.

"(The public funds are needed), especially in the education sector, to build human resources and the nation for the long term, not (to develop) the JPM."

Tuan Ibrahim said the government should use state funds that it saved from subsidy cuts on education as this would help the people achieve high income status.

"The prime minister needs not to worry about reduction in the 2017 Budget as long as he is committed to eliminating corruption.

"Imagine, if we have 10 houses all over the country, like what we had in Sabah, then we can recover the money we lost to leakage and theft.

"The country will save as much as RM1 billion. Isn't eliminating graft, which is widely supported by the people, is easier than increasing the goods and service tax (GST), which will draw flak?" Tuan Ibrahim added.

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