

Najib must walk the talk with the poor
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Humayun Kabir

The Perak Consumers Association (PCA) wants Premier Najib Abdul Razak to see that the 1Malaysia concept benefits the lower income group and not merely favour the rich and well-connected.

PCA president Abdul Rahman Said Alli today said Najib must ensure that every Malaysian shared in the nation's economic cake.

NONERahman added Najib had to reduce corruption, introducing the open tender system, and eliminate wastage of public funds to win over the people.

Najib, in announcing New Economic Model (NEM), stated that the bottom 40 percent of the population earned less than RM1500 per month in 2008.

Rahman said the premier had to ensure that Malaysians earn a minimum monthly wage of RM1500.

He also thought the lower income group faced too much red tape in getting business loans from banks and he wanted that to be cut down.

"Right now, many have to borrow from loan sharks and pawnbrokers to cover their monthly expenses."

The consumerist wanted the government to reduce the financial burden of the two percent monthly interest imposed by pawnbrokers to one percent.

This is to reflect the current economic situation where money was tighter than ever especially for the poor.

"At present the poor have to pay a total of 24 percent interest per year when they pawn their valuables and they have to redeem them within six months. Otherwise the items will be auctioned off.

"However the rich pay an annual bank interest of only 10 percent and between five and six percent for their car loans. Civil servants enjoy housing loans at four percent.

"This disparity of interest rates between the rich and poor has to be narrowed if 1Malaysia is to become a reality," he emphasised.