

**'Najib shines on Rosmah's Permata, but balks at SAR'
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A whopping RM111 million allocated to the Pusat Anak Permata Negara (Permata) programme under Budget 2011 has PAS questioning if the sum is justifiable.

"The government's focus appears to be misguided by reasons that make no sense. For example, the Permata programme, which is enjoyed only by a small group and is still in its infancy, has been allocated RM111 million.

"Compare this with the RM100 million allocation to improve the welfare of the Orang Asli and indigenous people and moreover, compare it with the RM95 million allocated as per-capita aid for primary and secondary religious schools (SAR)," PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang said in a statement.

Permata, the brainchild of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's wife Rosmah Mansor (*right*), is a pre-school education programme under the Prime Minister's Department and was established in 2006.

In Najib's budget speech last Friday, he announced that the RM111 million allocation was for the construction of the second phase of Sekolah Permata Pintar school complex, 32 Permata Children Centres (PAPN) and to finance operations of 52 completed PAPNs.

This was greeted by loud jeers from the opposition MPs, who accused the premier of prioritising a project in which his wife is heavily involved.

Wife first, performance later?

Similarly, PAS Youth information chief Fadhil Osman said that many SARs were in a dilapidated state, surviving on community efforts and thus Najib, who is also finance minister, was getting his priorities wrong.

"The question is, why is the premier willing to give attention to his wife's project when the SARs, which are propped up by the community, are regarded as less important?" Fadhil asked.

He said this episode showed that Najib's "People first, performance now" slogan rang hollow because there was a lack of enthusiasm towards promoting SARs, which would help to tackle social ills, unlike the Permata programme.

Meanwhile, Abdul Hadi (*left*) also chided the government's decision to build Warisan Merdeka, a 100-storey commercial building costing RM5 billion, as part of Budget 2011.

Contrasting it with the RM178 million allocated for the East Coast Economic Region (ECER), Abdul Hadi again accused the government of getting its priorities wrong.

"Corridor projects, which will serve the public better, are only receiving a sliver of federal allocations," he added.