

**Opposition MPs to get RM500,000 fund too**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**May 12, 2008**  
**Beh Lih Yi**

The announcement came as a good news to the opposition MPs who were not entitled for the annual fund previously, and other round-ups from the House today.  
MCPX

**BN, Pakatan MPs to get RM500,000 fund**

The Prime Minister's Department has announced a RM500,000 annual development allocation for all 222 parliamentary constituencies in the country, including those won by the opposition.

Although this came as a good news to the opposition MPs who were not entitled for the fund previously, it however saw a sharp cut for the BN MPs who received RM2 million previously. The amount was revealed by Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Hassan Malek in a parliamentary written reply to Loke Siew Fook (DAP-Rasah) dated May 6. A copy of the reply was distributed to the media today.

"The allocation to the parliamentary constituencies is the Prime Minister's (Abdullah Ahmad Badawi) special allocation to the constituencies which will be channelled through the state development office in respective states.

"After the 12th general election, the allocation that will be given to each constituency is RM500,000. All MPs can suggest to the state development office on the projects that are suitable to be carried out with the allocation," Hassan added in the reply.

Loke had asked for the new amount of the annual allocation and whether it will be given to the opposition MPs so that they too can enjoy the same rights as the government MPs.

Prior to the March 8 polls, the BN MPs received RM2 million for their respective constituencies while state assemblyperson also received a similar budget but the amount varied from state to state. However, constituencies held by the opposition did not get the annual allocation.

In an immediate response, Liew Chin Tong (DAP-Bukit Bendera) argued the announcement was "not truthful" and has reservation on whether the fund will eventually reach the opposition MPs.

He said this was because the BN federal government has announced the setting up of the 'federal action council' at the five Pakatan Rakyat-led states to deal with federal funding and it will not deal with the state development office.

**Mother's day appeal to free detainees**

The mother of Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) leader and Internal Security Act (ISA) detainee P Uthayakumar made a Mother's Day appeal to the government to free her son.

K Kalaivany made the appeal through a two-page memorandum today to free her son and all other ISA detainees, as well as to shut down the Kamunting detention camp in Perak, which is used to house the ISA detainees.

"Only a mother who had raised and nurtured her son would understand the torture of forcefully being separated from him," she said in the memorandum addressed to the prime minister.

"No mother on earth would condone her son committing an unlawful act and go unpunished but no mother would be able to digest the fact that her son is held for his political beliefs without being charged with any offence," the 67-year-old added.

The memorandum was handed over to PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail at the parliament lobby.

### **80 percent bumiputera students in local varsities**

The bumiputera students continue to top the students ethnicity breakdown in local universities five years after the meritocracy system was implemented, according to a latest statistic revealed in the Dewan Rakyat.

As of last year and out of 382,997 students, there are 79.7 percent bumiputera students, 12 percent Chinese, 3.2 percent Indians and 1.4 percent of other races and international students.

The figures were stated in a written reply from Higher Education Minister Mohamed Khaled Nordin to Loke Siew Fook (DAP-Rasah).

The minister said the government was confident that the number of the non-bumiputera students will increase after various steps were taken to encourage them to register at local varsities.

The meritocracy system was implemented in 2002 to replace the quota system in local universities, which had set a 55:45 ratio for enrolment of bumiputeras and non-bumiputeras respectively.

### **Perak reps visit parliament**

A delegation of Perak's Pakatan Rakyat elected representatives led by its Menteri Besar Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin visited the parliament today.

During the visit, the delegation held meetings with opposition leaders including PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang and DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang.

In a brief press conference later, Mohammad Nizar said the meetings did not discuss the recent controversial remarks made by Karpal Singh (DAP-Bukit Gelugor) against the Perak palace over the transfer of a state top religious official.

"We shouldn't jump the gun, the matter is now with the Attorney-General (Abdul Gani Patail) and we should let the attorney-general decide," he told reporters, adding that Karpal was not present during the meeting.

The menteri besar nevertheless bumped into Karpal at the parliament lobby later, where the duo greeted and spoke briefly.

### **Wan Azizah's motion on Burma shot down**

Opposition Leader Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail's (PKR-Permatang Pauh) emergency motion to debate on the Cyclone Nargis tragedy in Burma was rejected in the Dewan Rakyat today.

In rejecting her motion, Speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia said although the motion was of public interest and was a definite matter, it was however not urgent to be debated in the house.

In an immediate reaction, Wan Azizah said she was disappointed with the rejection of her motion which she described as similar "to rejecting humanitarian principles".

The tragedy has recorded more than 28,458 casualties so far and 33,416 people are still missing.

### **Devamany underfire for outdated data**

A Barisan Nasional backbencher today risked the ire of his fellow colleagues by criticising a Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister over an outdated reply given by the latter in parliament.

An irritated Abdul Ghapur Salleh (BN-Kalabakan) took deputy minister SK Devamany to task for failing to provide a real picture on the national and state's monthly household income during the 90-minute question session in the house this morning.

Abdul Ghapur's criticism came just after Devamany responded to a question by Lim Guan Eng (DAP-Bagan) that the national mean-monthly household income has increased to RM3,668 last year while the median-monthly household income stood at RM2,542.

The MP from Sabah, in a supplementary question, took a swipe at the new deputy minister and said the answer was "inaccurate" as he noted that his state has recorded a 24 percent poverty rate.

"The deputy minister shouldn't just ask for the answer from his officials. The answer is outdated. I think Cameron Highlands (Devamany's constituency) is a historian," Abdul Ghapur said as he argued the answer did not reflect the household income in Sabah.

Interjecting, Devamany smiled and disagreed to being labelled as a historian by saying: "Now, I'm economist."