

Najib's education splurge for a better future
Malaysiakini.com
Oct 23, 2009

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's maiden budget has placed emphasis on strengthening the education system.

To achieve this target, RM30 billion will be allocated to benefit 5.5 million students in national schools, government-aided religious schools, national-type Chinese and Tamil schools and mission schools.

Of this amount, RM19 billion has been set aside for emoluments, RM2.8 billion for student assistance and scholarship programmes, RM1.6 billion for the construction of 80 new schools as well as 1,100 additional blocks and 347 school replacement projects.

Schools, especially in Sabah and Sarawak, would be refurbished and upgraded.

To ensure the rakyat receives the best education, the PM has emphasised strengthening pre-school education by making it part of the mainstream education system.

"To date, the participation rate of children, between 5 and 6 years old in pre-schools is at 67 percent. The government aspires to increase the participation rate to 87 percent by 2012," said Najib in his Budget 2010 speech.

For this, he has assigned RM48 million for pre-schools to provide training and courses government and private pre-school teachers.

After 3 years of schooling, the government aims to raise the literacy and numeracy rate among school going children by 100 percent.

RM32 million has been set aside to equip schools with special modules, screen students to their capabilities and provide special training programmes for teachers.

20 schools will be identified as high performance schools, with an allocation of RM20 million set for them.

'New Deal' carrot and stick for teachers, heads

Najib also pledged to reward principals and head teachers who had achieved the performance targets.

Under the "New Deal" or "Bai'ah" system, school heads will receive monetary and non-monetary incentives, as well as autonomy in school administration if they hit the target.

However, he said that action would be taken against school heads who fail to meet the targets for two consecutive years.

To reward high flying achievers, the government will :

- award national scholarships to students who excel in exams, based on merit
- allow the National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) loans to be converted to scholarships for students who graduate with first class honours or equivalent

In addition, a 50 percent discount on Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad (KTMB) fares will be given to students aged 13 and above.

For this, a complimentary 1Malaysia student discount card will be issued at KTMB counters.

To assist low-income families, 100,000 first year students from this category will benefit from a Telekom Malaysia netbook package, which includes free broadband service, costing RM50 a month for two years.

To equip the workforce with relevant skills, the government will:

- allocate RM1.3 billion to manage and upgrade polytechnics and community colleges as well as provide an education loan fund to benefit 32,000 students
- set aside RM504 million to build, upgrade and maintain equipment at the Industrial Training Institutes and Advanced Technology Training Centres
- provide RM438 million to Institut Kemahiran MARA, Kolej Kemahiran Tinggi MARA, Institut Kemahiran Belia Negara and Institut Kemahiran Tinggi Belia Negara for training and upgrading
- provide RM110 million to state skills development centres and selected training institutions for industrial training programs.

The PERMATA program will be expanded with a RM100 million allocation to enhance the programme.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/115762>