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# 'No excuse for anyone to be deprived of education'

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BUDGET 2008 will make enhancing human capital a reality. Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said.

He said education was given a boost of RM30 billion, the biggest single allocation.

"We have always talked about democratising education.

"This year, we've made free school education a reality.

"When examination fees have been abolished and the textbook

loan scheme expanded to cover all students, regardless of their parents' income, there should be no excuse for any student to be deprived of education unless he drops out intentionally," he said at the parliament lobby yesterday.

Last year, examination fees for the Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR), Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) and the Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia (STPM) were abolished.

In Budget 2008, annual fees for primary and secondary schools and examination fees for the Sijil Tinggi Agama Malaysia will be rescinded from next year.

The RM30 billion allocation is intended for the implementation of the Education Development Blueprint, which includes the *Program Sekolah Cemerlang* or excellent schools programme.

When asked about the absence of bonuses and perks for the civil ser-

vice, Najib said not every proposed expenditure would be stated.

"It is not necessary that everything needs to be mentioned in a budget. If the government feels that something else should be added later, that will be considered and announced when the time is right.

"Our future plans are not restricted to what is contained in this budget. Wait first."

Najib said the budget had not been drawn up with the general

election in mind.

"It is a budget based on the National Mission that we want to accomplish and the targets we've set for ourselves."

He said the government was committed to reducing the deficit gradually, though no time-frame has been fixed to balance the budget.

On whether there would be a fuel price increase after a cut in fuel subsidies, Najib said the government would not be doing anything drastic.