

Newspaper	New Straits Times
Date	10/12/2010

# RM90.6m in aid for flood victims

By Noor Adzman Baharuddin  
noadzman@nst.com.my

ALOR STAR: Datuk Seri Najib Razak brought early New Year cheer to some 60,000 people in Kedah and Perlis who were affected by last month's major floods when he announced RM90.6 million in aid for them.

The prime minister said the aid, including a 53 per cent increase in compassionate aid for padi farmers and a RM500 *wang ehsan banjir* (floods compassionate aid) for all, was in line with his administration's 1 Malaysia slogan, People First, Performance Now.

"It was originally decided that padi farmers in the two states, both within or outside the Muda Agriculture De-

velopment Authority's jurisdiction, would receive RM573 per hectare in *wang ehsan banjir*.

"After coming here, I have decided to increase the quantum to RM876 per hectare.

"On top of that, every household affected by the floods will also receive RM500 each in *wang ehsan*," he said to thunderous applause from some 5,000 flood victims or their representatives from Kedah and Perlis at Stadium Sultan Abdul Halim in Suka Menanti here yesterday.

Najib, who was accompanied by his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, was here to hand over 10,000 mattresses and 5,000 cooking stoves, compliments of Yayasan Rahah, to the flood victims.

Present at the event, organised by

Putra Umno Club, were its president Datuk Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim, Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Md Isa Sabu and Kedah Umno liaison committee deputy chairman Datuk Ahmad Bashah Md Hanipah.

He apologised to the flood victims for not being able to visit them during their time of need.

"I apologise because you all know that I was down with chicken pox then.

"However, I had sent my personal representative to be with you," he said, drawing chuckles from the crowd as he glanced at Rosmah.

He continued to elicit smiles from the crowd when he confided in them that in all his 34 years in politics, he had never given away mat-

tresses.

"This is not only one or two, but 10,000 pieces of them."

Still in good spirit, despite a whirlwind working visit to Langkawi barely 24 hours earlier, Najib directed Abdul Azeez to get another 10,000 mattresses and 5,000 cooking stoves to be given to the flood victims.

Najib said besides the *wang ehsan*, which was given to all flood victims despite their political affiliations, the government had also allocated about RM60 million to help farmers replant their crops, especially padi.

"This is how your government operates. We care, and will always care for the people, especially in their hour of need."

He rubbished accusations by certain quarters that the floods were

caused by development.

"We need to have development (programmes) so that we can help the people but they must be sustainable and environment-friendly.

"Don't just simply blame the government for everything that goes wrong. We will continue to develop and help the people and this is the basis of our struggle."

Najib later flagged off a convoy of container lorries carrying mattresses and cooking stoves to all 15 Umno divisions in Kedah and Perlis, which would in turn distribute the items to flood victims.

He also handed a mock cheque for RM46.5 million to Muda Agricultural Development Authority chairman Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid, and another for RM13.5 million, to Md Isa.



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor visiting an Orang Asli patient after the launch of the 1Malaysia mobile clinic at Kampung Orang Asli Pos Raya in Simpang Pulai, yesterday. — Bernama picture