

Newspaper  
Date

New Straits Times  
6 February 2016

# 'Govt will continue to help poor'

**LIFELINE:** PM cites initiatives in revised budget despite drop in revenue

SUNGAI PETANI

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has given an assurance that the government will continue to look into the plight of people in need even though it has lost RM40 billion in revenue because of the drop in world crude oil prices.

He cited, as an example, the assistance to padi farmers in Kedah in the recalibrated 2016 Budget who will be receiving cash aid of RM50 for each tonne of padi produced as an incentive to increase productivity.

"In recalibrating the budget, the government took measures to alleviate the burden of the people, and I had said I was very concerned about the welfare of padi farmers in Kedah.

"I announced the additional cash aid of RM50 (for each tonne of padi produced) as an incentive. God willing, in future, we can consider more incentives.

"Hardcore poor families will receive 20kg of rice monthly through the MyBeras initiative and we will think of the best method to deliver the aid," he said when opening the Urban Transformation Centre (UTC) at Ukir Square here yesterday.

Present were new Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Bashah Md Hanipah, Education Minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom.

On the UTC, Najib said many foreign visitors were impressed with the concept, which is untried in many countries.

He said in some places, things could not be done on Sundays, and it was impossible to ask government officers to work on that day.

"In Malaysia, we get good cooperation from the public sector. That is why we can open the UTCs seven days a week, from 8.30am to 10pm. Such services make it easier for the



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak at the opening of the Urban Transformation Centre in Ukir Square in Sungai Petani, Kedah, yesterday. Flanking him is Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Bashah Md Hanipah (left) and Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Chua Tee Yong. Pic by Danial Saad

people to get things done."

Najib said the setting up of UTCs had brought a paradigm shift in the way state and federal agencies thought and operated.

"They do not think through their respective silos any more.

"Previously, agencies would think of how improvements could be made at their agency level. They do not think of how to work effectively together with each other.

"UTC has broken the walls that separated cooperation among state and federal agencies."

Najib said that UTC was a symbol of the government's aspiration, a transformation "on how we, as the government, can provide a better

and more effective delivery system for the rakyat's comfort".

Najib also approved a RM15 million allocation for the development of a business complex to benefit small traders and hawkers.

The endorsement was based on a request by Bashah in his maiden speech here yesterday.

Najib said in his speech that he hoped the business complex would help small traders and hawkers who did not have proper premises to operate their business.

Bashah, in his speech, thanked the Federal Government, especially the Finance Ministry, for choosing Ukir Square here to build the second UTC in Kedah.

"I believe the UTC at Ukir Square will benefit those living in the centre of Kedah such as Kuala Muda, Kulim, Baling, Sik and Yan.

"The location of the UTC here is strategic as it has a network of public transportation services such as express buses and electric train service," said Bashah.

The Sungai Petani UTC houses government agencies and departments, including the police, National Registration Department, Immigration Department, Road Transport Department, Land Public Transport Commission, National Anti-Drug Agency, Syarikat Air Darul Aman, Sungai Petani Municipal Council and Malaysia clinic.