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# Perks for veterans on the way

New welfare schemes aimed at easing financial burden

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**SERDANG:** Armed Forces veterans – especially those ineligible for pensions and those on early discharge due to disability and who receive as little as RM65 monthly – stand to benefit from the introduction of new welfare schemes aimed at easing their financial burden.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the schemes, including Skim Anuiti Veteran ATM (SAVE) and Bantuan Bakti Negara (BBN), were meant to honour their sacrifices for the country.

"The welfare of Armed Forces personnel will always be the Government's priority," he said in his speech during the Armed Forces Veterans Gathering at the MINES International Exhibition and Convention Centre in conjunction with Veterans Day celebrations.

Among other schemes he announced were improvements to the Disability Pension Scheme and the Post-Retirement Differential Ability Scheme.

Under BBN, some 66,000 non-pensionable veterans are expected to receive RM1,200 each based on the same criteria for recipients of IMalaysia People's Aid (BR1M).

A further 10,959 non-pensionable veterans who are not eligible for BR1M will receive RM600, provided they are over 60, the Prime Minister said.



**Overwhelming support:** Najib with Hishammuddin being greeted by attendees of the Armed Forces Veterans Gathering at the MINES exhibition centre. — AZHAR MAHFUF/The Star

SAVE is aimed at those who are still serving but intend to retire before they are eligible for pension. Najib said its objective is to provide life-long monthly income for future non-pensionable veterans.

The improvement to the Disability Pension scheme for veterans and full-time Wataniah (Territorial Army Regiment) soldiers involves those who served less than 10 years and were not eligible for pension.

"This covers those who retired early owing to disability in the line of duty," Najib said, adding that the quantum was based on the extent of injury, rank and length of service when the disability occurred.

"At present, these veterans only

receive RM65 in pension. With the improvement, they will get an increase of between 300% and 800%.

"It involves pensions of between RM500 and RM2,000."

In the case of veterans who suffered disability after retirement, Najib said the Post-Retirement Differential Ability Scheme will pay each of them RM1,000.

"The Government is always mindful of the plight of veterans, in terms of cost of living and medical costs," Najib said.

He added that the haj quota for veterans would also be increased from 100 people to 400 this year.

The Warriors' Fund would also

receive a total of RM5m allocation this year, he said.

"All the incentives announced prove that the Government's efforts to assist veterans are inclusive and holistic," Najib said.

As of May, there were 288,952 Armed Forces veterans, including those who served during the pre-independence era.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said the ministry planned to hand out the incentives by October. He also said the incentives were not goodies for the coming general election.

He added that the ministry had also created a call centre for veterans.