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CASH ASSISTANCE

NAJIB: BR1M NOT A BRIBE

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Aid recipients not forced to support BN, says PM

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak yesterday reiterated that the cash assistance to people under the Malaysia People's Aid (BRIM) was not a bribe but to help the needy.

He said BRIM recipients were not forced to support Barisan Nasional, nor was it distributed only to those

who supported BN.

He said the Saudi Arabia government had a similar version of cash assistance for its citizens.

"I spoke to several Saudi Arabian ministers yesterday (Sunday), and they told me that they had opened a bank account specifically for the purpose of giving out cash aid to needy families.

"So, when (former prime minister Tun) Dr Mahathir (Mohamad) says BRIM is a form of corruption, then what is the difference between BRIM and the one the Saudi government is giving out?"

"The Saudis do not think that (their cash handout) is a form of bribery," he said at the launch of the Residensi Kerinchi flats and Wilayah

Persekutuan feast here.

Najib, who is also finance minister, said the oil-rich Saudi government would also introduce the Goods and Services Tax (GST) soon.

"Therefore, the Malaysian government's move to implement this taxation system was not wrong.

"There must be a valid reason as to why the Saudi government also wants to implement GST."

Najib said he was also told by the Saudi ministers, who were accompanying their ruler's four-day state visit to Malaysia, that the oil price in their country had increased by half.

"Here, we make a big fuss over an increase of 10 sen or 20 sen."

The prime minister said the people should not be swayed by the

provocations by the opposition parties as the government had made various efforts to improve the livelihood of Malaysians.

Dr Mahathir had said in December last year that giving out BRIM amounted to bribery.

However, he was later reported to have changed his mind in mid-January when he said his new political party would consider implementing it if it won the next general election.

Present at yesterday's event were Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor, Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Minister Tan Sri Noh Omar and Lembah Pantai Umno division chief Datuk Seri Raja Nong Chik Raja Zainal Abidin.