

Saying Malaysians are better off, Najib announces another NKRA
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Aug 11: After removing subsidies for basic items such as sugar, oil and gas resulting in spiraling inflation affecting consumers products, prime minister Najib Razak now says it is time to tackle rising cost of living.

Writing on his '1Malaysia' website, Najib announced he would introduce yet another National Key Results Area (NKRA), with a view to tackle rising cost of living "in view of the global and domestic rise in prices of food and various essential materials".

The other six NKRAs focuses on crime, corruption, education, low-income households, rural infrastructure and urban transportation.

Najib admitted that two years after these NKRAs were announced, the cost of living had risen, but described it as symptoms of a global phenomenon.

"In two years since the NKRAs were announced, the cost of living in Malaysia has risen to affect a majority of the population, in varying degrees. Many are feeling the pinch, but are not quite aware that this phenomenon is occurring worldwide, and hitting many other countries fairly hard.

"The fact is that so many global factors have affected our cost of living," he wrote.

Najib said his upcoming 2012 Budget "will definitely focus on the management of rakyat's living cost".

"We will devise the best strategies possible to ease rakyat's burden while at the same time manage the country's economic development," he added, though he made no mention of high expenditure on military purchases which among others had been the focus of the Opposition's criticism against his financial policies.

Recently, the Defence Ministry received an extra allocation of RM493.3 million to maintain the two Scorpene submarines, which were purchased from France amid allegations of bribery and linkage to the 2006 murder of Mongolian Altantuya Shariibuu.

The allocation meant that the defence budget ballooned to some RM11 billion this year alone.

Meanwhile, in explaining his reasoning that rising cost was due to global factors, Najib reminded Malaysians that they "are certainly not the worst affected".

"The Government continues to provide subsidies in your daily travels, meals and health bills, among others," he added.

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