

Budget 2012: RM5 Billion To Strengthen Rural Basic Infrastructure
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 7 (Bernama) - The government has allocated RM5bil to strengthen basic rural infrastructure development in a more comprehensive manner next year, said Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

The Prime Minister said of the total, RM1.8bil is for Rural Roads Programme and Village Link-Road Project to construct 2,749km network of roads to benefit 1.76mil rural population.

Another RM2.1bil has been provided to expand water supply to 200,000 homes and RM1.1bil for electricity supply to 39,000 houses in rural areas, particularly in Sabah and Sarawak, he said when tabling 2012 Budget in Dewan Rakyat Friday.

Public Infrastructure Maintenance Project (PIA) and Basic Infrastructure Projects (PIAS) to upgrade basic infrastructure especially in rural areas has been a success and the government will continue to implement them with an allocation of RM500mil.

"Implementation of PIA and PIAS will involve the participation of about 29,000 Class F contractors registered with the Contractors Service Centre," he added.

Najib said the government was particularly concerned with clean water supply to rural communities, including in remote areas of Sabah and Sarawak, although the water supply reticulation projects take a long time to implement.

As an immediate measure, the government has supplied tanks 20,000 for the collection of rain water in the interior of Sarawak, especially longhouse residents at a cost of RM52mil.

"This facility provides benefits to about 100,000 people. For 2012, the programme will be extended to Sabah with an allocation of RM50mil," he said.

Some RM400mil has been allocated for upgrading water supply infrastructure in stages in selected FELDA schemes as the facility has been operating for over 50 years and obsolete.

He said the government also allocated RM50mil to improve water supply that involve extending supply from estates to the main pipes.

It also agreed that water supply authorities impose domestic tariff on estate housing estates as compared to industry rate at present.

"The Ministry of Human Resources will be responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of water supply facilities."

He said to provide a more comfortable, credible and quality bus service, an additional allocation of RM150mil will be prepared and channeled to the Public Transport Development Fund at SME Bank.

As such inter-city bus, mini bus and school bus operators could apply for soft loans with four

percent interest rate to buy or repair buses. This facility will be available from January 1, 2012," he said.

For the safety of Orang Asli population in Sungai Ruil, Cameron Highlands, the government will allocate RM20mil to relocate the landslide victims to new housing areas.

Najib said four more Rural Transformation Centres (RTC) will be built in Kedah, Johor, Sabah and Sarawak.

The National Agrobusiness Terminal (Teman) at Wakaf Che Yeh, Kelantan and Gopeng, Perak will be developed as RTC pilot project.

Some RM100mil in soft loans with four percent interest will be provided by Bank Simpanan Nasional (BSN) under the Professional Services Fund for lawyers, doctors, accountants and others to set up firms in small towns.

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