

**Women Gain Special Focus In 2012 Budget, Says Shahrizat
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KANGAR, Oct 9 (Bernama) -- Women received special focus in the 2012 Budget in the government's effort to enhance their capability, including in the economic sector, said Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil.

She said to increase women's economic participation, for instance, Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia would provide RM2.1 billion in micro credit loans, of which 90 per cent of the borrowers were women, to carry out small businesses.

Shahrizat who is also Wanita Umno chief, described the special focus given to women in the national budget this time as historic, and urged women to grasp the opportunities provided by the government to improve their lot.

She was speaking to reporters after launching the state-level Kembara Nur (Nur Expedition) programme in Kuala Perlis, near here, Sunday.

She was happy that the 2012 Budget took into consideration the needs and interest of all of the ministry's target groups who included senior citizens, children and the disabled.

In another development, Shahrizat said RM24 million in aid had been distributed to 8,644 Perlis residents since January this year through the ministry's various programmes.

The biggest allocation of RM21 million was given out to 8,156 recipients through the Social Welfare Department under the 1Malaysia People's Welfare programme.

Another RM2.4 million was given out in the form of equipment grants to 479 people to start up business under the Teman 1Azam (Friends of 1Azam) programme.

At today's event, Shahrizat also handed out RM135,000 in compensation payments through the 1Azam Insurance Scheme to the next of kin of nine household heads who had died.

Also present were Kangar member of parliament Datuk Seri Mohd Radzi Sheikh Ahmad and state Tourism and Health Committee chairman Ahmad Bakri Ali.

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