

Budget lacks reforms for a competitive Malaysia, says Kit Siang
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 9 — Lim Kit Siang said today Budget 2012 lacks reforms and will lead to Malaysia being overtaken by regional competition.

“The 2012 Budget is designed to win the next general elections for (Prime Minister Datuk Seri) Najib (Razak) and not to reform and transform the country’s system, structures and institutions,” the DAP parliamentary leader said in a press statement.

He added that this will see “Malaysia being overtaken by more in national, economic and human resource development including in Southeast Asia,” he added.

Najib promised cash handouts, more money for civil servants and schools, and a fund for “high-impact development” projects as part of his Budget 2012 measures to put cash in the pockets of voters ahead of a general election expected soon.

The 2012 Budget tabled on Friday also set aside RM33.2 billion for subsidies.

But DAP publicity chief Tony Pua said yesterday the handouts in Budget 2012 are “a sugar-coated placebo” as the lack of reforms will “only tax you more later.”

He added that while “goodies big and small were liberally handed out to practically all segments of society” in the Budget, BN failed to present “transformative changes to achieve high-income nation” status.

Lim, who is also Ipoh Timur MP, said apart from Barisan Nasional (BN), reactions to Najib’s “election budget” have not been enthusiastic, with Transparency International lamenting that the Budget “fails to inch the country towards any form of transparency and accountability”.

Analysts had also described it as a “non-event for the market” because of its rosy projections of five to 5.5 per cent GDP growth for 2011, between five and six per cent next year and a budget deficit of 4.7 per cent for 2012.

“It is not sufficient for Najib to give cash handouts to certain groups as the government has ignored the welfare of the average man and woman who face the same cost-of-living pressures,” Lim said.

“A more stringent targeted subsidy for the poor should be put in place instead of goodies according to occupational category,” he added.

Lim accused Najib of the most brazen and cynical budget exercise to reach out to voter support from targeted groups comprising important vote-banks.

“But the inequitable and corrupt system which bred decades of injustice, inequality and exploitation remains completely untouched,” he said.

"The questions all are asking ... are not whether Malaysia will become more competitive and better ... but whether it will fortify Umno and Barisan Nasional's position in the next general election and save Najib's premiership."

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