

**BN Has Long Safeguarded Welfare Of People - Najib  
Bernama  
October 7, 2011**

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 7 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said while certain groups are trying to promote the welfare state's concept, the government has long implemented various programmes to safeguard the people's welfare through subsidies, incentives and aid in the spirit of the 'People First'.

"We congratulate them, as only now they realise the concept of a welfare state. But let's have a little political sincerity, do not act as if they are the first to discover the formula.

"Is it not the Barisan Nasional government that has practiced the concept of a welfare state for a long time? " he said when presenting the 2012 Budget at the Dewan Rakyat here Friday.

The prime minister said is the BN government not a welfare state as it had been providing subsidies for every kg of local super grade rice, sugar, cooking oil and flour.

"These basic food subsidies, which require an allocation of RM2.3 billion, are enjoyed by all Malaysians regardless of their socio-economic status in urban or rural areas. As such, are these not the hallmark of a welfare state?" he asked.

Najib said the subsidies were not limited to just food items as they also covered subsidies for petroleum products and cash assistance involving RM17 billion.

He said these included every litre of RON95 petrol and diesel, and every 14kg cooking gas cylinder.

"In addition, the government will continue to provide subsidy for households with electricity bill of RM20 million or less, which was implemented since 2009. This will involve an allocation of RM150 million and benefit one million households.

"All the subsidies, incentives and assistance amounted to RM33.2 billion," he said, adding that all these were provided in the spirit of the 'People First'.

He said RM1.1 billion would be allocated under the 1Malaysia Rakyat's Welfare programme or KAR1SMA, which included a monthly aid of RM300 to poor senior citizens; a monthly aid of between RM100 and RM450 per month to children from poor families; a monthly aid and allowances of between RM150 and RM300 per month to disabled people.

Najib said KAR1SMA would ease the burden and benefit almost 500,000 people.

He said in efforts to offset rising prices and high cost of living, the government would increase the number of Kedai Rakyat 1Malaysia (KR1M) nationwide, which had been offering 250 types of 1Malaysia products.

"In view of the overwhelming response, the government plans to open an additional 85 units in 2012 with an allocation of RM40 million," he said.

The prime minister said the government would open 30 Agro Bazaar Rakyat nationwide to market agriculture produce and 1Malaysia brand products besides expanding the sales of 1Malaysia products in all outlets under the Retail Shop Transformation (TUKAR) programme, Felda retail stores and convenient stores at petrol stations nationwide.

He said the government would extend and promote the Menu Rakyat 1Malaysia which were offering popular menu sets at reasonable prices with a maximum of RM2 for breakfast and RM4 for lunch.

"To date, more than 700 food operators are involved and this will be extended to 3,000 operators by the end of 2012," he said, adding that the government encouraged cafeteria operators in government offices and the private sector to provide the menu.

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