

Full of Kar1sma
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PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak yesterday launched the RM1.4 billion welfare programme, Kar1sma, for 500,000 people.

He said the poor, elderly, handicapped, single mothers and underprivileged groups would benefit from monthly payouts of between RM100 and RM450.

The programme also set aside RM4.1 million for about 2,000 widows of military personnel and policemen.

Described as a "newly branded welfare programme for the people", Kar1sma will provide skills training for the said groups to improve their lives and instil independence in them.

"We have people who need help. If there are no government intervention programmes like this, they will be sidelined. "This is one of the pillars of Gagasan 1Malaysia in upholding social justice.

These people will not only be helped financially, they will also be given new skills and mindsets to help themselves and contribute to the country." Najib said the programme was initiated under the Government Transformation Programme to ensure these people were not left out of the nation 's growth.

While some countries reduced allocations for pensioners and welfare programmes, he said, Malaysia not only continued to help the needy, but also increased funds for them.

"We will reach out to about 500,000 people. Don't make one-off contributions and go around telling the whole world about it.

"The Barisan Nasional government is committed to helping underprivileged Malaysians on a monthly basis.

"This shows our commitment to the people and that we will uphold social justice." Last year, the government spent RM1.2 billion, through welfare programmes, to help 424,000 people.

The largest group of recipients are senior citizens, who make up 30 per cent.

Present were Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil and representatives of groups who will receive the aid.

Shahrizat said the programme would help the underprivileged break out of their cycle of hardship.

She added that the programme complemented other government initiatives, including health benefits for the needy.

In identifying the recipients, she said the ministry, through its agencies, stressed on the efficiency of application processes, including removing red tape.

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