

**PM: We will tackle rising costs**  
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MEASURES IN PLACE: Government has spent RM36.7 billion to provide various forms of assistance

THE government will work hard to spur economic growth for the country and ensure that Malaysians are not adversely affected by the escalating cost of living.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said various measures had been introduced, such as the Cost of Living initiative under the National Key Result Areas, to assist the people.

"This is my way of ensuring the rakyat's bread-and-butter issues are taken care of.

"Hardworking Malaysians should not be punished by the escalating cost of living. Therefore, my government, while working hard to ensure persistent economic growth, will not compromise the interests of the poor and working class.

"I will do whatever is best to tackle rising costs and find ways to reduce the effects on the people through the transformation process," he said on his 1Malaysia blog yesterday.

Urging the people to "stay and work hand-in-hand" with him to transform the country, Najib said the government had spent RM36.7 billion from 2010 to last year providing various forms of assistance.

This, he said, included subsidies to maintain the price of RON95 petrol at RM1.90 per litre, as well as cooking gas, sugar and other essentials.

He said the government had also announced the one-off financial aid of RM500 or Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia (BR1M) for households earning RM3,000 and below. To date, BR1M has been disbursed to some 4.78 million households.

"For parents with schoolchildren, I took note of your concern and distributed RM100 aid per child to mitigate the 'back to school' expenses. That's RM530 million channelled back to the people. Other innovative measures, such as Kedai Rakyat 1Malaysia and 1Malaysia Clinics, were also introduced under the Cost of Living initiative."

Najib said he had visited many villages and some comprised families with low income and near- primitive lifestyle.

"One of the villages I remember most is Kampung Bantal. Folks there survive on basic necessities and their low income made it harder for them to cope," he said, adding that as a responsible prime minister, he would never allow the people to be left out of the country's development.

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