

**RM1.4 Billion Allocated For Elderly, Disabled And Single Mothers This Year - Najib Bernama
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SEREMBAN, March 24 (Bernama) -- The government has allocated RM1.4 billion to assist the elderly, disabled and single mothers this year, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said of the sum, RM478 million was allocated to assist 135,000 senior citizens whereby they received RM300 in monthly payments.

Speaking at a "Meet-the-People" session and launching of the Caring for Old Folks Awareness Campaign in Taman Desa Rhu, Sikamat here Saturday, Najib said the assistance was part of the government's policies to ensure the social safety net in the country was further strengthened.

"We cannot practice a welfare state policy like in western countries which today are facing economic challenges because their governments are no longer able to sustain such a practice.

"As such, we cannot choose this path but strengthen our social safety net through the 1Malaysia People's Welfare Programme whereby assistance is extended via home assistance programmes, Care for the Edlerly Services Unit and others," he said.

He said, although the government was extending various forms of aid for the elderly, the biggest contribution should be coming from their children.

On the campaign, he said it was very timely as caring for and assisting the elderly should not be shouldered by the government alone, instead it was their children who should be taking up the responsibility.

He said, as children, love and gratitude to parents was a must and that this should never be compromised.

"Our parents brought us up with unconditional love, our mothers gave birth to us after nine months of pregnancy, naturally they will need us in their old age.

"This (caring for the elderly) is what we must instill in our society. Do not sent parents to the old folks home. Even if it cannot be avoided, at least find ways where they can still spend time with us (the children)," he said.

Najib also pointed out that in 2010, 2.1 million people or 7.5 per cent of the Malaysian population consisted of citizens aged 60 and above and that by 2020, the figure was forecast to rise to 3.2 million or 9.5 per cent of the population while in 2030, the percentage of the eldery was expected to reach 15 per cent.

"Try to imagine, we will be facing a new challenge in Malaysian society when the percentage of senior citizens is so high. With the better healhtcare available in the country, more and more people will grow to a ripe old age," he said.

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