

**Minister denies BR1M siphoning from fuel subsidies**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 28 — Fuel subsidies are not being diverted to pay for the cash handouts announced in Budget 2012, Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob was reported as saying by Bernama Online today.

Yesterday, the domestic trade, cooperatives and consumerism minister announced that subsidies for RON95 petrol has been raised by 10 sen to keep pump prices at RM1.90. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had pledged in February to keep fuel prices unchanged this year.

Following a question by Azan Ismail (PKR-Indera Mahkota) today on whether the 10 sen increase was being funnelled towards the Bantuan Rakyat 1 Malaysia (BR1M), Ismail said today that Najib had previously earmarked funds for the hike in fuel subsidies.

“Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak had allocated RM1.98 billion for fuel subsidy in the 2012 Budget, so this is not true (that the subsidy increase is being used to pay for BR1M),” the minister said in Parliament today.

Earlier this month, Najib revealed that 80 per cent, or 3.74 million out of 4.78 million households, had successfully applied for BR1M as of March 1, amounting to RM1.92 billion being disbursed.

The prime minister had announced the RM500 aid for households earning less than RM3,000 a month in his budget speech last October, saying it would help ease the burden from surging cost of living.

The unprecedented handouts for an estimated 5.3 million households are set to cost RM2.3 billion.

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