

1,500 submit budget wish list FEEDBACK: BR1M and cash aid among top requests to PM
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A TOTAL of 1,500 Malaysians have responded to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's call for their views and suggestions for Budget 2013.

The people flooded Najib's 1Malaysia Blog asking for government help for issues like rising house prices, high cost of living, employment, healthcare and education.

Najib, who is also finance minister, made the call on his blog, www.1malaysia.com.my, on July 16 stating, "I believe it is important that the people be given an avenue to voice their ideas on how we can best bring this country forward on the world stage, socially and economically".

"To those of you who are keen to have your say, now is your chance."

Najib will table Budget 2013 on Sept 28 at Parliament.

Rising property prices in the Klang Valley has been a major concern. One respondent, Mohd Ridwan Idris said: "If this persists, it would definitely create a greater divide between the rich and the poor in the country."

Another respondent, using the username "Rakyat Biasa", also voiced concern over the rising prices of homes in the Klang Valley with many new housing projects selling units at more than RM500,000.

"A special rebate must be given to the average and lower income group, while wealthy home buyers are limited to a maximum of two houses each," he said.

Respondent "Suara Graduan" hoped Budget 2013 would address the difficulties faced by fresh graduates in getting jobs.

"I hope more job opportunities will be created," he added.

"Rakyat at large" also hoped to see improvements in the healthcare industry, more tax relief and increased subsidy for RON95 petrol.

Fresh graduate Mohd Safwan Aziz lauded the initiative taken by the government to improve the people's lot through various aid programmes over the last three years.

"The RM100 cash aid for primary and secondary students has helped my parents care for my six school-going siblings."

He hoped the RM500 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M) and the school voucher will be continued next year to ease the people's burden.

Consultant Sri Krishan anticipated a holistic Budget 2013, which would bring about synergy and peace among people of various races.

Meanwhile, the country's business community is hopeful that Najib's Budget 2013 will boost the competitiveness of local firms.

Malay Businessmen and Industrialists Association of Malaysia (Perdasama) president Datuk Moehamad Izat Emir hoped the government would make it cheaper for small businesses to hire foreign labour.

Moehamad Izat said labour agents were demanding RM12,000 for Filipino workers and RM10,000 for Indonesian workers.

"I beg our prime minister to use his wisdom to look into this matter," he added.

Federation of Chinese Association of Malaysia deputy secretary, Prof Dr Chin Yew Sin wanted the government to reduce personal and corporate tax.

He said the country's corporate tax now stood at 25 per cent, which was high when compared with 18 per cent in Singapore and 15 per cent in Hong Kong. Lowering the tax would attract more foreign and domestic investments.

He said the current five per cent corporate tax reprieve for SMEs on their first RM500,000 revenue should be extended to RM1 million, to allow spending on automation and expansion.

Chin also hoped that another round of BR1M and student book vouchers would be allocated under Budget 2013 as it could spur domestic consumption.

Malaysian Indian Business Association president P. Sivakumar meanwhile said the government should allocate RM300 million for Indian businesses under Tekun (Tabung Ekonomi Kumpulan Usaha Niaga).

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