

2013 Budget: Middle-income Group Not Sidelined, Says Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 3 (Bernama) -- The government would not sideline the middle-income group in the 2013 Budget, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said various incentives were given out to assist this group, including one percentage point income tax reduction for those in the RM2,500-RM50,000 income bracket.

"We also provide housing programmes for the middle-income group. We give them other facilities too that benefit them like the My First Home scheme.

"The middle-income group is not sidelined, we give them what we can afford to give," he said in the 'Ask Najib' programme broadcast live by Astro Awani (Channel 501) Wednesday night.

This programme enabled Malaysians from all walks of life to pose questions to Najib via Twitter, Facebook, Google and video-conferencing on the 2013 Budget which was tabled by the prime minister on Sept 28.

To one of the questions, Najib said the huge allocation for administration costs involving the public sector was to motivate public servants to provide more efficient service delivery to the public.

He said the public must understand that the government was not only caring for the lot of 1.4 public servants but the welfare of their families as well.

To a question on the benefits from the Budget for the people of Sabah and Sarawak, Najib said the government provided a rather big allocation to balance the market price of basic goods in the two states.

"Through this special programme, we will at least ensure that the prices in Sabah and Sarawak are not much higher than the prices in the peninsula.

"In the annual budget, we also provide allocations for rural electricity and water supply facilities including to the longhouses," he said.

Meanwhile, Najib said investors would have more confidence to do business in Malaysia when they saw a politically stable, peaceful and harmonious country.

"When they look at Malaysia, they will compare us with other countries. And when they like what they see about Malaysia...peaceful, harmonious, no violent street demonstrations....confidence in Malaysia certainly will be much higher.

"As a nation, we will benefit from that kind of perspective," he said in reply to a question on whether the Budget and the country's economy would be affected with violent street demonstrations and chaos caused by irresponsible parties.

Commenting on the government's efforts to fight crime, he hoped the motorcycle patrolling unit would be implemented as soon as possible to enhance security in housing areas and ensure public safety.

Najib said the government would allocate RM20 million to provide 1,000 motorcycles for the patrolling unit.

"I am very excited about this patrolling programme," he said in the one-hour interactive programme.

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