

PM Wants Housing Developers To Provide Senior Citizens Community Centre
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 17 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Wednesday suggested that housing developers provide activity centres for senior citizens in their new housing projects.

The Prime Minister said that as the senior citizens were living on their own and were lonely, it was appropriate that the centres be created, just like the requirement for kindergartens.

"One infrastructure that needs special attention is the setting up of an activity centre for senior citizens on a wider scale for the local community.

"Thus, it's appropriate that new housing projects provide activity centres for senior citizens, just like the requirement to provide preschool facilities," he said when launching the National Senior Citizens' Day, here today.

The event, with the theme "Productive Senior Citizens, Chart The Future", was also attended by the prime minister's wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor and the Deputy Minister of Women, Family and Community Development, Datuk Heng Seai Kie.

Najib, who is also the Women, Family and Community Development Minister, said that among other things, the facility would enable the senior citizens to indulge in social and recreational activities together with other members of the community or their peers, so that they would not be lonely.

He said to ensure that this group continued to be productive and feel appreciated, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development would also take measures to achieve this objective by utilising 45 halls under the ministry as activity centres for senior citizens.

The Prime Minister said senior citizens numbering 2.2 million or 7.7 per cent of the total population of 28.3 million in the country could also chart a productive future by grabbing the opportunities from the various incentives provided by the government such as joining the cooperatives movement.

Najib said that in this context, the government through the Ministry of Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism offered grants and loans of up to RM80,000 to those intending to set up new cooperatives.

"Specifically, an automatic grant of RM30,000 will be offered based on the cooperative project submitted to the Cooperative Commission of Malaysia, and at the same time, the cooperative will be given priority to apply for a loan of RM50,000 without collateral compared with loans offered by the commercial banks," he said.

On the celebration, he said the theme chosen, "Productive Senior Citizens, Chart The Future", was most appropriate because senior citizens formed the most important asset to the country based on the knowledge, experience and expertise they had which was difficult to replace, and their age and retirement should not be taken as a 'fullstop' for them to continue to contribute.

Najib said to ensure that the senior citizens continued to contribute to the nation, the government had adopted several approaches, including to raise the retirement age for civil servants from 58 to 60 beginning this year.

He said the government had also formulated the Minimum Retirement Age Act 2012 to set the minimum retirement age for private sector employees.

"The move was taken as part of the country's preparations to face the challenges of ageing because based on the projection, Malaysia is expected to reach the status of an old nation by the year 2030 when 15 per cent of the population are senior citizens," he added.

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