

Najib: Govt will ensure people are not burdened
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KERTIH: WHATEVER the government does, it must be on the basis that it will not inflict undue hardship on the people, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said yesterday.

"So we have to devise a scheme that will gradually reduce subsidies but in a way that does not add to the burden of the people," he said after officiating the groundbreaking of a RM2 billion biorefinery plant at the Kertih BioPolymer Park here yesterday.

Najib was asked to comment on Umno Youth chief and Rembau member of parliament Khairy Jamaluddin's proposal for the government to do away with subsidies recently.

"We are embarking more on targeted (subsidy), in other words, twice in a row now, we have gone for the 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M), that is delivered to a target group because it goes to households earning RM3,000 and below."

Najib said this was a better move as opposed to giving subsidies on certain items where the rich, foreign tourists and even illegal immigrants would also benefit.

"Quite a lot of (the subsidised) goods are smuggled overseas and so there are a lot of leakages which we, the taxpayers, and the country are paying for.

"We started reducing subsidies from last year. This year, it was with sugar. People understand that it was the right thing to do."

Najib added that handouts, in the form of BR1M, were better because they were received by the target group.

On another matter, he said Malaysia received large amounts of foreign investments despite misleading information by the opposition on the economic situation in the country.

Najib said this showed that investors had faith in the government.

"People must understand that this a government that cares for the people.

"At the same time, it makes decisions that are fiscally responsible. We just don't give away what we cannot afford.

"However, the Budget takes into account the future needs of the country and of our economy because it is a Budget designed to promote investments to stimulate the economy as well.

"So don't just focus on the things that we give to the people. It's also a Budget that strengthens the resilience and competitiveness of the domestic economy."

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