

PM Announces 30 Minutes Free Internet Service For The Poor
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 19 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak today announced free Internet service for the first 30 minutes for poor people in the urban and rural areas.

He said details of the service would be released by the Information, Communications and Culture Ministry.

Speaking at a meeting with Telekom Malaysia (TM) staff here, Najib also announced a one-off consolation payment of RM500 to more than 27,000 TM employees.

He said the TM management would make the payment to all permanent, contract and seconded staff before the week-long school holidays starting March 25.

"The gift is reflective of the sharing of the nation's prosperity. The nation is administered well, it is prosperous, we share. TM is well-managed, TM is successful, we share the success with TM staff," he said.

The prime minister praised TM for having connected the high speed broadband (HSBB) service to 1.377 million premises up to the end of last year, more than the targeted 1.34 million premises.

He said the public-private partnership (PPP) between the government and Telekom Malaysia in providing broadband service to the people had brought about positive results.

Najib said that when he proposed the matter to the Cabinet several years ago, he felt that a broadband service could drive the nation's per capita income.

"Studies at the international level show that a rise of 10 per cent in HSBB results in a one per cent improvement in the GDP (Gross Domestic Product).

"When I made the recommendation to the Cabinet then, I was convinced of the integrity and professionalism of TM. Evidently, my thoughts about TM have been proven right," he said to applause from the 800 TM staff. The speech was also carried live by video to the TM offices in the rest of the country.

Najib said now was the time for "raya" (celebration) after having implemented the HSBB almost three years ago. "Soon, we will have another 'raya'," he said in reference to the general election (pilihan raya) and, in a lighter vein, said that with their blessings his next visit to TM, God willing, would also be as the prime minister.

At the event, TM donated RM100,000 each to the National Heroes Welfare Trust Fund and the Royal Malaysia Police Welfare Fund as a gesture of support for the families of the policemen and soldiers killed in the offensive against the Sulu terrorists in Sabah.

Also present at the event were Information, Communications and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim, TM chairman Datuk Seri Dr Halim Shafie, TM chief executive officer Datuk Seri Zamzamzairani Mohd Isa and Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) chairman Datuk Mohamed Sharil Tarmizi.

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