

## **PM answers cost of living query in absence of opposition MPs**

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**By Jennifer Gomez**

No amount of enforcement can solve the problem of leakage where bulk subsidies are involved, the Prime Minister said in Parliament today.

Responding to a supplementary question from Kinabatangan MP Datuk Bung Mokhtar that enforcement agencies were not doing enough to monitor traders who raise prices indiscriminately, Datuk Seri Najib Razak said even with strict enforcement, certain people would take advantage of bulk subsidies.

"Which is why we must move towards targeted subsidies which will benefit only Malaysians and not foreigners, smugglers and tourists," he said, in the absence of opposition MPs in the Dewan Rakyat.

Najib said that measures taken to ease the burden of the people against escalating living costs include the allocation of nearly RM40 billion in Budget 2014 for subsidies, incentives and assistance to the rakyat.

He said that the government's long-term plan to ensure that subsidies reach the targeted groups, including improving the BR1M payment system, would eventually result in billions of ringgit in savings.

All 89 opposition MPs were not in the august house today following a planned boycott to protest Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's conviction on a sodomy charge.

Anwar was sentenced to five years' jail last Friday after the Court of Appeal overturned a High Court ruling that acquitted Anwar of sodomising a former aide. – March 11, 2014.

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