

**Shelter For The Homeless To Be Ready Within Six Months - Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, July 10 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said a shelter to house homeless people and beggars in the capital is expected to be ready within six months.

The prime minister said the shelter would provide sleeping cubicles, bathrooms and lockers for the homeless to keep their belongings.

"It shouldn't be long. That's what they need, not flats, but a place to doze off at night so that they do not sleep on the streets," he told reporters after dropping by at a soup kitchen in Jalan Tun Perak here Wednesday night.

He expressed the government's appreciation to the soup kitchen volunteers for feeding the homeless in the capital and providing medical assistance to them.

The prime minister, who arrived in Jalan Tun Perak at 10.40 pm, spent about an hour observing food and drinks being distributed by the soup kitchen volunteers before taking a walk around the Cahaya Suria building.

The homeless and beggars, mostly elderly people, were given rice with chicken, apples, hot coffee, syrup drink, bread buns, wafer biscuits, hot coffee, syrup drinks and packet drinks.

The prime minister was briefed on the Pertiwi Soup Kitchen's operation by its founder, Munirah Abdul Hamid.

The homeless issue became a hot topic after Tengku Adnan said that soup kitchens would be barred from distributing food to the homeless within two km radius of Lot 10 in Jalan Bukit Bintang.

However, he withdrew the instruction on Tuesday following public outcry and said the ministry would give an opportunity for the soup kitchens to operate in the area until Aug 16.

Najib, who was accompanied by Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Tengku

Adnan Tengku Mansor and Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Rohani Abdul Karim also spoke to several homeless people and beggars sleeping on the streets and at bus stops.

A homeless man, Lim Kim Hua, 63, who was sleeping at a bus stop in the vicinity of the Cahaya Suria building, was awoken after realising that the prime minister was standing beside him.

In the 10-minute encounter, Lim, an ex-taxi driver from Selangor, told Najib that he became homeless as he had no family members to look after him.

The prime minister also greeted a father and his two-year-old son who slept on a plastic sheet on a pavement in Jalan Silang.

A homeless woman, Norliza Mat Zain, 42, from Teluk Intan, who was sleeping in Jalan Silang, told Najib that she came to the capital with her husband who was looking for a job.

However, her husband had since been jailed and will be released before Aidilfitri.

A ex-car salesman, Tan Yap Heng, in his 70s, told Najib that he had been homeless for over 20 years after he could no longer find work after turning 60.

Tan said he had been robbed before and his applications to get aid from the Welfare Services Department were turned down time and again as he did not have a permanent address.

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