

**RM100 Schooling Assistance, 1Malaysia Book Voucher To Continue
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 23 (Bernama) -- The government will continue giving the RM100 assistance to needy students and RM250 1Malaysia book voucher to higher learning institution students.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said while tabling the Budget 2016, themed, 'Prospering the Rakyat' at the Dewan Rakyat today, that from January 2016 onwards, the RM100 assistance would only be given to students from households with a monthly income of RM3,000 and below.

The assistance totaling RM35 million would benefit 3.5 million students, he said.

To avoid misuse of the RM250 1Malaysia Book Voucher which would benefit 1.2 million higher education students, the prime minister said redemption would only be allowed in designated bookshops.

Najib said the supplementary food programme which previously provided meals only during recess, would be expanded to include breakfast.

The programme, to benefit 550,000 students from poor families listed in the 'e-Kasih' would cost RM423 million.

The prime minister regards human capital as a critical factor for the future of the nation, hence the RM41.3 billion allocation to strengthen quality of education under the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025.

Among others, the government would build 30 primary schools and 27 secondary schools.

Four MARA Junior Science Colleges (MRSM) would also be built in Sik, Kedah; Ketereh and Tanah Merah in Kelantan; and Bagan Datoh in Perak.

The government will also build five fully residential schools in Alor Gajah, Melaka; Pendang in Kedah; Segamat and Ledang in Johor; and Jerantut in Pahang.

A sum of RM44.6 million has been allocated to implement various programmes in 9,113 preschool classes at schools nationwide, said Najib.

He said the Budget 2016 had also set aside RM135 million to increase proficiency in Bahasa Melayu and English Language.

Given the importance of the English Language in the global arena, another two initiatives, namely the Dual Language Programme and Highly Immersive Programme costing RM3.5 million would be implemented as an option.

In this respect, 300 schools have been identified as a pilot project.

As in previous years, Najib said, the government would continue to provide allocation to develop and maintain education facilities for national schools, national-type Chinese schools and national-type Tamil schools.

Also included are religious schools, fully residential schools, national religious assisted schools, MARA Junior Science Colleges, registered Sekolah Pondok and national-type Chinese secondary schools or Conforming schools which adopt the national curriculum. For this, RM500 million has been set aside.

To encourage the people to pursue higher education, a maximum relief on tuition fees for an individual taxpayer is increased to RM7,000 from RM5,000 a year, said Najib.

Scholarships would also be continued with RM1.65 billion to be disbursed through the Public Service Department; RM288 million through the Education Ministry, RM250 million through the Higher Education Ministry and RM258 through the Health Ministry.

The International Trade and Industry Ministry will establish an Industrial Skills Committee to coordinate the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes in collaboration with industries.

The government is targeting to ensure that 60 per cent of the 1.5 million new jobs to be created by 2020 would comprise workers with TVET skills.

Najib said RM4.8 billion would be allocated for 545 TVET institutions under the Budget 2016. More than 330,000 trainees will benefit from this.

He said RM585 million would be utilised for TVET training equipment at polytechnics, community colleges, MARA Skills Institutes, National Youth Skills Institutes, Industrial Training Institutes, GiatMARA and vocational colleges.

RM350 million will be used to finance various TVET training programmes under the Skills Development Fund Corporation while RM80 million, for establishment of a Tourism Academy at Community College in Kota Kinabalu and Vocational College in Sandakan as well as Industrial Training Institute of Serian, Sarawak.

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