

PM Assures Govt Will Continue To Look Into Plight of Rakyat In Need Of Assistance
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SUNGAI PETANI, Feb 5 (Bernama) - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has given the assurance that the government will continue to look into the plight of the rakyat (people) in need of assistance even though it has lost revenue amounting to RM40 bilion because of the drop in world oil prices.

He cited as an example the assistance to padi farmers in Kedah whereby with Budget 2016 recalibrated on Jan 28, they would be given cash aid of RM50 for each tonne of padi they produced as an incentive to increase productivity.

"In recalibrating the budget, the government took several measures to alleviate the burden of the people, and I had said I was very concerned about the welfare of padi farmers in Kedah.

"I announced the additional cash aid of RM50 (for each tonne of padi produced) as an incentive. God willing, in future we can consider more incentives. For hardcore poor families, they will receive aid of 20 kgs of rice monthly through the MyBeras initiative and we will think of the best method to deliver the aid," he said when opening the Urban Transformation Centre @ Ukir Square here today.

Also present were new Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Bashah Md Hanipah, Education Minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom.

On the UTC, Najib said it was a symbol of the government's aspiration to carry out transformation for the people.

"This is how a government can have a more effective delivery service for the comfort of the people at the most minimal cost.

"We have set up 10 UTCs since 2012. A total of 11.5 million people have used UTC facilities throughout the country. While at the UTC in Alor Setar, since July 2013, as many as 3.7 million people have used the facilities," he said.

Najib said the setting up of the UTCs was a meaningful and effective approach with traders gaining business opportunities while customers could shop and use the facilities provided.

He said the UTC had broken down the walls and tackled the loopholes which previously affected cooperation between government departments and agencies.

"In Malaysia we have good cooperation between civil servants, that is why the UTC is open seven days a week, a facility which is enjoyed by all," he said.

Meanwhile, at the end of his speech, Najib approved an allocation of RM15 million to the state

government to build a business complex here to house local traders.

The allocation was in response to Ahmad Bashah's request in his speech for assistance to gather traders from around Kuala Muda in one place in a more organised and systematic manner.

Ahmad Bashah said he had seen the need for the complex when he was Deputy Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Minister previously.

"The RM15 million allocations will have a direct social impact on hawkers, petty traders and residents of Sungai Petani. The complex will help raise their income and spur them to reach for greater heights in the business world," he said.

On the UTC, he said the choice of Ukir Square was a wise decision as it was a very strategic location,

He noted that it was the centre of the public transportation network in the town with bus and rail terminals thus providing easy access for the people.

Ahmad Bashah took his oath of office as the 12th menteri besar of Kedah yesterday, replacing Datuk Seri Mukhriz Tun Dr Mahathir who resigned a day earlier citing loss of majority support in the state legislative assembly.

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