

**Budget 2017: RM535 Mln Allocated For 150,000 PWDs - Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 21 (Bernama) -- The government has allocated RM535 million to benefit almost 150,000 persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the 2017 Budget, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said the sum included employee allowance, disabled children training allowance as well as assistance for PWDs who were unable to work.

Besides that, he said registered PWDs were also provided with Goods and Services Tax (GST) relief for the purchase of aid equipment without going through private charitable entities while expanding the scope of goods eligible for tax relief.

"Indeed for us, PWD brings us a broader meaning as they have special and exceptional abilities and they have proven themselves as world-class sports heroes," he said when tabling the 2017 Budget at Parliament, here today.

According to him, he had great joy in inviting four of the nation's 2016 Rio Paralympics athletes who delivered the country's medals to attend the Budget 2017 speech in the Parliament.

The athletes were Mohamad Ridzuan Mohamad Puzi, Muhammad Ziyad Zolkefli and Abdul Latif Romly who won gold medals at the Rio Paralympic Games while Siti Noor Radiah Ismail contributed a bronze medal.

Apart from that, Najib said assistance to poor families including General Assistance of up to RM300 per month and Children Assistance of up to RM450 per month would be continued to benefit 69,000 families.

He said a sum of RM424 million would also be provided for 120,000 senior citizens including socioeconomic assistance of RM300 a month as living allowance and pocket money programme.

"Apart from that, eight new Senior Citizen Activity Centres will be established," he said.

Najib said the government also recognised the role of community leaders such as village heads in creating a harmonious and prosperous society in the country.

Therefore, he said the government agreed to increase the allowance of village heads, chairmen of Village and Federal Development and Security Committees including heads of new villages and Orang Asli from RM800 to RM900.

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