

**Policies Pursued By Government Are For the People's Welfare - Najib
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PEKAN, Dec 17 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak today said every policy pursued by the government was aimed at helping the people, even though sometimes the actions taken were not popular.

Najib, who is also Pekan MP, said for example, when the goods and services tax (GST) was introduced in April last year, many parties questioned its implementation and said that it was not necessary.

"When GST was introduced, the government was ridiculed...criticised, but if we do not have GST how can we create programmes to help the people, especially the B40 group (low income households), from where are we going to get the income if oil prices drop.

"The answer is through the GST revenue collection system, and when the system is in place, we can return the income to the people, especially to this group," he said.

He was speaking at the handing over of keys ceremony for homes and trader kiosks under the Urban Poverty Eradication Programme (PPKB) in the Pekan parliamentary constituency, at Kampung Pulau Jawa, here.

Najib said through the proceeds, the government could also carry out many welfare programmes for the people, including providing the Affordable Housing Scheme under Suruhanjaya Perumahan Negara Berhad (SPNB) which provides subsidies of up to RM31,000 for those who build homes on their own land.

"Not only that, we also have the Housing Project for the Hardcore Poor (PPRT) where we sell (houses) with subsidies of up to RM80,000. Just imagine, this is all the grace of living in a peaceful country with a government which adopts a people's welfare policy.

"That is why we must look at it this way, each effort (by the government) to provide welfare does not come easy or out of thin air, but it is planned by the government, as the country's fiscal policy can provide sufficient funds to develop the country in all aspects," he said.

According to him, people in the country should also be grateful that the GST introduced by the government was still low at just six per cent, with exemption for 4,000 selected items, when in some other countries such as India, the rates charged were much higher.

"I have communicated directly with the Prime Minister of India (Shri Narendra Modi) via a video conference recently, and he had indicated that they would implement the GST in the country next April with a rate of three to 23 per cent with no exemptions of any kind," he said.

At the event, Najib handed over keys to 21 PPKB recipients for houses worth RM40,000 each, and 10 trader kiosk units including equipment worth RM15,000 each to the B40 group in the Pekan

parliamentary constituency.

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