

RM81m to give the poor, disabled a better life

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Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his wife Datin Paduka Seri Jeanne Abdullah meeting the people before the launching of the second phase of the national-level Semai Bakti Programme at Simpang Empat yesterday. — NST picture by Rosli Ahmad

■ **By Sharanjit Singh and Audrey Dermawan**
news@nstp.com.my

NIBONG TEBAL: The government has allocated RM81 million to help manage and conduct activities for the disabled and underprivileged at community rehabilitation centres (PDK) nationwide.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday said the cabinet had approved the allocation recently.

Of the amount, RM60.1 million will be used to run the centres while RM20.9 million is for making one-off allocations for these centres.

"We have always been a government whose soul is with the people," Abdullah said.

"We have done much to care for the underprivileged and disabled and our policies are all geared towards promoting a caring society."

He said this when he opened the second phase of the national-level Semai Bakti Programme at Sim pang Empat near here.

The programme was jointly organised by the Association of

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Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi

Wives of Ministers and Deputy Ministers (Bakti), Women, Family and Community Development Ministry and the Penang government.

Also present were Bakti president Datin Paduka Seri Jeanne Abdullah and Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil.

The PDK was established to help the disabled and their families.

Abdullah said the allocation was also part of the government's efforts to lessen the burden of families with disabled members.

Touching on the issue of rising cost of goods and the crime rate, Abdullah said the government had taken various measures to tackle these problems.

"We have helped the rakyat by putting into place several measures like stepping up enforcement to ensure there is no indiscriminate hike in the prices of

goods. We have also abolished school fees besides giving other forms of aid to the people. These are all part of the measures to lessen the burden of the people."

On crime, Abdullah said people should also play their part in ensuring the safety of their family and not leave all the responsibility to the police.

In her speech, Jeanne called on the public and private sectors to provide suitable job opportunities for the disabled.

She said it had been proven that the disabled were capable of achieving success in various fields and cited the recent showing of the country's disabled athletes at the 4th Asean Paragames in Korat, Thailand, where they finished second overall.

"Their success is something for us and the country to be proud of. There are many other shining examples like the success of spastic Dr Ruziah Ghazali, who managed to obtain her doctorate from Universiti Putra Malaysia.

"These are just a few examples and the disabled have proven that they are capable of achieving successes in many fields."