

18/11/1997

#### RM793m Budget unveiled for 1998

reports on "Pahang State Assembly" by Azran Aziz  
THE Pahang Government yesterday unveiled a Budget of RM793.48 million for next year, which is RM63.72 million or 8.73 per cent more than this year's Budget.

Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohd Khalil Yaakob, when tabling the State Supply (1998) Enactment, said the increase was moderate and in line with the present economic situation.

Khalil said there would be a surplus of RM2.2 million in next year's Budget compared with RM1.21 million this year.

Revenue is projected at RM510.99 million against expenditure of RM508.79 million.

"As the State still depends on traditional sources of revenue such as land and forest, prudence is needed," he said.

Khalil said the State Government would strive for a balanced Budget and a balanced development among all the districts.

Of the RM793.48 million, the infrastructure/industrial sector will receive the bulk of the allocation (RM303.6 million) followed by the allocation for social work (RM66.21 million), religious activities (RM39.22 million), administration (RM15.37 million), agriculture (RM17.14 million) and entrepreneurship (RM11.09 million).

"We will continue to focus on rural development. At the same time, we will strengthen our social and religious agenda," Khalil said.

He said the State's economic growth for next year was expected to be seven per cent, down 0.9 per cent from this year.

"However, the value of Gross Domestic Product is expected to soar from RM7.07 billion this year to RM7.572 billion next year," he said.

He said the manufacturing sector was expected to record a 13.9 per cent growth next year, down 2.1 per cent from this year.

"Industrial areas that have been developed now accommodate 584 manufacturing projects, which have a combined investment of RM12.47 billion and have created 38,330 jobs.

"Projects with investments totalling RM6.5 billion are being negotiated," he said.

Khalil said greater emphasis would be given to the tourism sector.

"A sum of RM4.3 million will be set aside for promotional programmes of our tourism products. This year, only RM1 million was allocated for this purpose," he said.

Khalil also expressed confidence that Malaysia's economy would soon recover under the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"The State Government will support efforts by the Federal Government to get the people to be actively involved in checking attempts made to weaken the economy of the country," he added.

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