

19 OCT 2001

Budget-Rural Development

BIGGEST EVER ALLOCATION OF RM5.34 BIL FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 19 (Bernama) -- The 2002 Budget provides the biggest ever allocation of RM5.34 billion to further increase the facilities and amenities in the rural areas, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Among others, this includes RM1.58 billion for agriculture, RM378 million for land and regional development as well as RM392 million for village and community development.

"The allocation also includes the implementation of rural and village road projects as well as the provision of water and electricity supply," he said when tabling the 2002 Budget in the Dewan Rakyat here today.

Dr Mahathir, who is Finance Minister, said that the government will increase the coverage of potable water supply to 99 per cent in the peninsula, 75 per cent in Sabah and Sarawak while achieving full coverage for electricity supply by the end of the Eighth Malaysia Plan.

For this purpose, a total of RM185 million is allocated for rural water supply, particularly for interior areas in Sabah and Sarawak.

A sum of RM211 million will be provided for rural electricity, including installation of street lights along village roads in 16,207 villages.

Dr Mahathir said that for family health programmes in rural areas, an allocation of RM202 million will be provided for a total of 383 health clinics while RM8 million will be provided for 13 Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation Programme (Bakas) which will include the construction of a water supply and sanitation system as well as waste and sewerage management.

He said that rural education is also given emphasis with an allocation totalling RM900 million provided for primary and secondary schools while RM100 million is allocated for six matriculation colleges.

A sum of RM205.5 million is allocated for the construction of computer laboratories and facilities in rural schools while a total of 7,800 houses will be built with an allocation of RM215 million to ensure comfortable living conditions for teachers in rural areas, he said.

For the improvement of educational facilities in the rural areas of Sabah and Sarawak, a sum of RM180 million is allocated for the construction and upgrading of teachers' houses as well as the provision of potable water and electricity supply in schools.

Dr Mahathir also said that a sum of RM114.1 million is allocated for the development of Orang Asli, involving 412 villages with focus on reducing the poverty level of Orang Asli.

-- BERNAMA

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