

19 OCT 2001  
Budget-Roundup (Reaction)  
POSITIVE REACTION TO 2002 BUDGET

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 19 (Bernama) -- There was generally positive reaction to the 2002 Budget tabled by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the Dewan Rakyat today, described as reflecting the government's determination to meet the needs of the people in the wake of uncertainties in the global economy.

It also brought good news for the 900,000 government employees who will enjoy a half month's bonus or at least RM1,000 this year and a salary increase of 10 per cent next year.

In KANGAR, Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim said that the Budget could help narrow the development gap between the states in the country and described the Budget as "the best in the world".

"While many countries in the world are experiencing a recession, the Malaysian government led by the Barisan Nasional (BN) is still able to bring cheer in the Budget," he said.

In KOTA KINABALU, Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah (PBRS) president Tan Sri Joseph Kurup said the 2002 Budget took into account the needs of people from all social strata especially the rural population in the state.

This was because measures outlined under the Budget were prepared to help them face the hard impact of the impending global recession, he said.

In KUALA TERENGGANU, opposition leader Datuk Abdul Rashid Ngah said that the federal government had not ignored the people of Terengganu and Kelantan even though both states were ruled by PAS.

He said that the special allocation for the very poor in Terengganu and Kelantan proved that the federal government does not practise discrimination and would continue to provide assistance to the people in both states.

Commenting on terrorism, Abdul Rashid, who is the Seberang Takir state assemblyman, said that the early measures taken by the government to counter terrorism were to prevent foreign investments and tourism from being affected.

Meanwhile, Malay Contractors Association Malaysia president Roslan Awang Chik welcomed the government's move to improve the income of class F contractors by increasing rural development projects.

He said that the contractors concerned should be grateful over the opportunities provided them and implement the projects well in efforts to ensure the success of the country's development programmes.

In PENANG, Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon described the 2002 Budget as comprehensive and stimulating especially for the state whose economy was based on the industrial sector and information and communication technology (ICT).

He said that the government's move in encouraging promotion and incentives for the fields of robotics, machinery and automation, as well as the fields of education, ICT and e-government would also further stimulate economic growth in the state.

He also said that the incentives provided to tour agency operators and the services sector especially for hotels and restaurants would help make the tourism sector more competitive and would attract more tourists from Asian countries.

Sahabat Alam Malaysia honorary secretary Meena Raman said that SAM welcomed the allocation of RM114.1 million for the development of the Orang Asli as well as the increase in tax on the tobacco industry in the country,

saying that the advertising of goods with cigarette brand names should be banned.

In KOTA BAHARU, Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat said that the 2002 Budget had outlined excellent strategies for the people especially in poor states like Kelantan.

He said that the benefits would be enjoyed fully by all especially in Kelantan if the strategies in the Budget were implemented the best possible way.

Ex-Servicemen Association Malaysia president (PBTM) president, Senator Datuk Mohamad Abdul Ghani described the Budget as very sensitive to the people's needs and very balanced to prevent a recession.

He said that the Budget brought good news to government employees especially armed forces personnel especially in terms of their housing needs.

In SHAH ALAM, Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohamed Khir Toyo said that the big allocation for rural development was a remarkable move to balance the income disparity between the people in the urban and rural areas.

He expressed hope that certain quarters would not hike prices following the increase in the prices of petrol and diesel.

In KUANTAN, state executive councillor Maznah Mazlan said that the government's move in allowing single mothers to continue to draw their late husband's pension even after they had remarried would help reduce their burden in meeting their daily expenses.

She said that the RM59 million allocation to fund special programmes for women would help them realise their full potential.

Another state executive councillor, Datuk Shahiruddin Abdul Moin, said that Felda's assistance for smallholders facing hardship due to the drop in the prices of commodities showed that the government had given attention to their plight.

In KUCHING, Sarawak Bumiputera Business Council (DUBS) president Datuk Abang Abdul Karim Tun Abang Openg, in welcoming the measures to stimulate the national economy, said Bumiputera entrepreneurs in the state should come up with strategies to face the challenges brought about by the current economic gloom positively.

In MELAKA, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Ali Rustam called on state government agencies to spend the allocation during the set time frame.

He said that the state government was happy over the focus on the services sector development especially the tourism sector with the tourism fund increased to RM400 million from RM200 million.

In JOHOR BAHARU, state executive councillor Samat Aripin reminded the people to spend wisely following the 10 per cent salary increase and the reduction in individual income tax by 1 per cent to 28 per cent.

His colleague, Othman Jais, expressed hope that the various incentives provided by the Budget would encourage more investments in the agricultural sector.

A government servant, Aishah Ali, welcomed the bonus payment and the salary increase as it would greatly help meet expenses in the city where the cost of living is very high.

-- BERNAMA

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