

20 SEP 2002

BUDGET-STRATEGIES

BUDGET 2003 ADOPTS NEW APPROACH TO GENERATE ECONOMIC GROWTH

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 20 (Bernama) -- The thrust of the 2003 Budget has taken a new dimension with the main focus on domestic business and industrial activities to generate higher growth.

The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also the Minister of Finance, said this in tabling Budget 2003 at the Dewan Rakyat here today.

He said Budget 2003 focussed on strategies of increasing domestic investments in all sectors with growth potential.

It would also identify and venture into niche areas in the services, agriculture and manufacturing sectors.

Dr Mahathir said the domestic market was small but the purchasing power of 24 million Malaysians could be increased.

Each Malaysian only contributes, US\$4,000 to the economy but if they increase productivity, the nation's gross domestic product and competitiveness would be enhanced. Per capita income would also increase.

He said he nation must find ways to increase every rakyat's contribution to the economy.

The shift that we have taken from agriculture to manufacturing has succeeded in increasing per capita income to US\$4,000 today from US\$300 at Independence.

By enhancing the value-added products, GDP and consequently its per capita income would also increase.

Small countries in Europe, with smaller population than that of Malaysia have become developed nations.

Citing examples, he said, Switzerland and Luxembourg with a population of 3.0 million and less than 1.0 million respectively had higher per capita income of US\$44,000.

This means every citizen of Switzerland and Luxembourg contributes US\$44,000 to their economy.

Dr Mahathir also said Budget 2003 would focus on strategy of strengthening public sector finance and enhancing efficiency of the civil service.

Budget 2003 would also nurture progressive and harmonious society with high moral values and ensure the well being of the rakyat, especially in rural areas. -- BERNAMA

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