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RAFIDAH-BUDGET/BM

BUDGET STRENGTHENS COUNTRY'S ECONOMY, SAYS RAFIDAH

BEAUFORT, Sept 21 (Bernama) -- International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz described the Budget 2003 tabled by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday as not only people friendly but also aimed at enhancing the country's resilience.

She said that the focus was not only on the economic sector, industry and trade, but also on other important sectors like education, information and communications technology and social.

Apart from that, the government had also given opportunity to the people to obtain more income, which they could use to spur the economy through the one month bonus or a minimum of RM1,200, she said here today.

Earlier, Rafidah who is also the Wanita Umno head, officiated the Umno Beaufort Gerak Mesra programme.

Rafidah said: "The country's resilience would exist when the private sector is able to increase production and export its products.. with the comprehensive Budget this time, it is hoped that this would enhance the country's resilience to face future economic challenges."

She also thanked the Prime Minister, who is also the Finance Minister, who had accepted almost all the suggestions put forward by her ministry.

"The suggestions were accepted because they were realistic, can reduce trade cost and able to generate the performance of the small and medium scale industries and increase their export capacity," she said.

On the suggestion to turn Labuan into a Centre for Registration of International vessels, Rafidah said that it was done at the right time.

"This is a development which has been expected. I am sure that the government will provide the relevant infrastructure to turn Labuan into an international shipping centre," she said. -- BERNAMA

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