

16/09/2002

Muhyiddin: Opposition's budget merely a gimmick

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - The Opposition's alternative budget to be presented in Parliament is merely a gimmick and an attempt to belittle the 2003 Budget that will be tabled on Friday.

Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said today if the Opposition went ahead with its plans, it would be a disgrace to the Dewan Rakyat as the move was unconstitutional and not provided for under the Standing Orders.

"It only goes to show their arrogance. They think they are going to win in the next general election and form the Government.

"It is an irresponsible act done without any respect for the highest law-making body of the country," he said.

Muhyiddin, who is Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister, said this after opening the Ministry's Family Day at the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia in Kepong.

He was asked on plans by the Opposition to table its own budget to rival the Government's Supply Bill.

He said the shadow budget, said to be drawn up by Pas, Parti Keadilan Nasional and Parti Rakyat Malaysia, would be full of empty promises unlike the Government which had a track record of fulfilling fiscal policies and programmes outlined in its budget.

"It is nothing but a ploy to belittle the budget to be tabled by Prime Minister and Finance Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. But I am confident the people will not be fooled by it."

Muhyiddin said the Opposition's only interest was to find fault with whatever the Government had done so far in boosting the economy and uplifting the people's standard of living.

Instead of wasting time, he advised them to debate the national budget and come up with constructive proposals.

Muhyiddin was also asked on Dr Mahathir's statement that he would not contest the next general election.

"It reflects his desire to retire and to see a smooth power transition.

"We have to respect his decision and sacrifice although we know the Prime Minister is still capable (to contest)."

Although Dr Mahathir would relinquish all Government and party posts in October next year, Muhyiddin said he was confident the Prime Minister would continue serving the country and Umno after retirement, albeit in a different capacity.

Dr Mahathir, who has been Kubang Pasu MP since 1974, said in Alor Star on Friday that his role in the next general election would be to campaign very hard for Barisan Nasional.