

15/09/2002

Opposition to table budget before Sept 20

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - The Opposition Front will unveil its alternative budget to the public before the Government presents its budget on Sept 20.

Parti Keadilan Nasional deputy president Abdul Rahman Othman said the Opposition's Supply Bill has been finalised, adding that it focuses on policies and measures towards sustainable development.

"We want to give the people a chance to compare our budget and the one that will be tabled by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad," adding that it will also be read out by Opposition leader Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang in Parliament.

He added that the Opposition's budget will balance the needs of the rakyat and the business community and be based on the principle that "what you consume today is what you leave for the children of tomorrow".

Responding to criticism that the budget was a political gimmick, Abdul Rahman said the Opposition was serious about promoting its policies to the people and that the budget was formulated with the help of accountants, economists and former officials from the Treasury.

"It does not matter who holds the nation's purse. What is important are the fiscal policies which an administration implements. Our policies are those which the people can expect us to implement if we are voted into power."

Yesterday, Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak criticised the Opposition's plan to table its own budget in Parliament, saying that it was a political gimmick and did not reflect reality.

Najib said the Opposition could announce salary increments but it did not have to worry about where the money for those measures would come from and their implications.