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PBS-Budget

PBS SAYS 2003 BUDGET IS PAINLESS

KENINGAU, Sept 22 (Bernama) -- The 2003 Budget tabled by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Friday has continued to receive high praise from Sabah, with Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) today describing it as historic as it is the first ever national budget without any tax measures.

Speaking when opening the annual general meeting of the PBS Bingkor Division, deputy president Datuk Dr Maximus Ongkili said the 2003 Budget was most generous and totally painless.

"The 2003 Budget was historic because while it gave an inventory of income and income sources as required of any budget, it did not introduce any new tax measures or increase existing tariffs which would have burdened consumers or taxpayers.

"On the contrary, the Budget simply reinforced and refined existing revenue-raising strategies and dished out development goodies for all sections of the population.

"The Budget proposals and estimates clearly reflect that the economic fundamentals of the nation are in good state and that development needs can be met by existing revenue sources without introducing burdensome tax measures," he said.

"There is no previous budget on record that is completely painless to tax payers and consumers. Of course, the Minister of Finance stressed that enforcement measures will be strengthened to ensure that taxes due for the year are collected," said Dr Ongkili, the MP for Bandau.

He said all Malaysians should support such measures by paying their taxes to ensure that government has sufficient revenue to finance its development programmes.

Dr Ongkili also welcomed the increased allocation for rural development, especially for Sabah and Sarawak.

"For Sabah the amount allocated for rural water supply and rural electrification has been increased to RM88 million and RM80 million respectively, which is almost 30 percent higher than the 2002 allocation," he said.

This augurs well for the state as there is a need to further upgrade the standard of living of the rural population.

-- BERNAMA

JS YBY