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SABAH-BUDGET (BM)
SABAH TO HAVE "RAKYAT-FRIENDLY" BUDGET

KOTA KINABALU, Sept 22 (Bernama) -- The Sabah state budget, which will be tabled at the state legislative assembly next month, will be "rakyat-friendly" and will emphasise on rural development, said state finance minister Datuk Musa Aman today.

"We will more or less follow the national budget which also stresses on rural development to assist those who are less fortunate. We should emulate this and apply it in Sabah," he told reporters when asked what form would the state budget take after he had opened a seminar on strategic risk management organised by Creative Business Services Sdn Bhd and Ernst & Young here.

Musa described the 2003 Budget tabled by Prime Minister-cum-Finance Minister as "good, caring, harmonious and progressive which emphasised on low income earners and rural development."

The 2003 Budget also demonstrated that the Malaysian government was fair on distributing the nation's wealth.

Musa said Sabah would be able to receive adequate allocation for rural development and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi who would visit the state tomorrow was expected to announce the allocation from the federal government.

Last Friday, Dr Mahathir said RM963 million would be spent on development projects this year and would be distributed fairly to poorer states and those which possessed large tracts of rural and undeveloped areas.

The infrastructure projects to be developed in villages include roads, bridges and building repairs like mosques and community halls.

Musa said bumiputera contractors would be given priority in the rural development projects. -- BERNAMA

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