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Chinese dailies applaud 'pragmatic' Budget

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FEEDBACK on Budget 2004 dominated the pages in major Chinese dailies yesterday and on Saturday.

Many expressed satisfaction with the goodies dished out by the Government to enhance growth in manufacturing, agriculture and tourism, while some praised the measures to boost consumer spending and strengthen small-and medium-scale industries.

Many also applauded the measures to reduce the burden of the low-income group and the handicapped, including tax relief for parents.

Sin Chew Daily's editorial on Saturday said although it was the seventh deficit budget in a row, it signalled the Government's determination to achieve a balanced budget in 2005.

The editorial also acknowledged that although the Budget placed considerable emphasis on industrial and corporate development, certain measures were clearly aimed at improving the lot of the people, particularly the low-income group and the disabled.

Nanyang Siang Pau congratulated Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for his "pragmatic and visionary" budget, which it said would enhance Malaysia's competitiveness.

However, the paper said the Government must also continue to attract foreign investment.

China Press, meanwhile, expressed concern over the road tax exemption for motorcycles below 150cc.

In its editorial yesterday, the daily said although the policy would benefit the low-income group and students, matters like the need to insure motorcyclists and the possibility that the exemption might lead to more motorcycle thefts should be addressed.

In another development, Sin Chew applauded the Barisan Nasional supreme council's decision to lift the suspension of two MCA Penang State Assemblymen, Tan Cheng Liang and Lim Boo Chang.

The decision, said a commentary yesterday, would pave the way for better understanding between the State MCA and Gerakan.