

24/05/2003

Stimulus package gets pride of place in Bahasa dailies

Ramlan Said

THE economic stimulus package announced by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad dominated the pages of the country's two Bahasa dailies on Thursday, with the Prime Minister's speech published in full.

To help readers grasp the various incentives offered, the newspapers carried graphics and highlights of the package.

The editorials, meanwhile, provided a broad analysis of the RM7.3 billion aid intended to overcome the sluggishness largely caused by the war in Iraq and the SARS outbreak.

Views and comments from economists and people in the industries which would benefit from the "minibudget" were also given space.

Street polls were conducted to gauge public response, with the majority interviewed giving the thumbs up, especially civil servants who received an unexpected half-month bonus.

Yesterday, the attention of Utusan Malaysia and Berita Harian shifted to the confirmation by MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik that he would step down from the post he had held for 17 years.

Both carried a similar page one headline, with Utusan Malaysia saying Ling sah letak jawatan and Berita Harian declaring Dr Ling letak jawatan.

Utusan Malaysia on Wednesday published a letter from a reader blaming the media for the sudden surge in demand for pornographic VCDs said to feature Malaysians.

Muhamad Abdul Wahab of Kuala Lumpur said the media had fuelled public interest in the VCDs after some newspapers splashed the story on their front pages. A TV station has also featured the same topic in its investigative programme.

The paper also reported plans by the army to set up an air assault battalion, which would be equipped with attack helicopters.

Army chief Datuk Wira Shahrom Nordin was quoted as saying an existing infantry battalion would be turned into the new outfit.