

RM15mil for 'information war' in S'gor
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The Selangor government has allocated RM15 million to enhance the delivery of information in the state, to counter 'BN propaganda and biased news coverage' by the print and electronic media.

"If we consider the population of 5.2 million in Selangor, this amount is equal to RM3 from every person," revealed Selangor Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim this morning when opening the 2010 stage budget dialogue.

He said the move is intended to provide people in Selangor with information that will enable them to make wise decisions.

NONThe fund will be used to spread information through the state-owned media including TVSelangor, the Selangor Kini portal and Selangor Kini newspaper.

"We will explore the potential of creating Radio Selangor to expand the spread of information," he said.

Khalid said he had consulted the state treasury which had agreed that the allocation is acceptable based on its importance.

Some 300 state government officers and representatives of GLCs and NGOs are attending the dialogue alongside parliamentarians and state assemblypersons.

Khalid claimed that news reports on the state government have not been balanced.

"What we (read about) is always action to smear the state government. It is understood that this is a politically-motivated and partisan attempt to give the impression that Pakatan Rakyat doesn't have the ability to govern," he said.

He cited several examples to back his assertion that many in the state are not aware of assistance provided by the state government.

taib mahmud 02"Some have said the 20 cubic metres of free water (a month) is from the federal government.

Even worse, during Hulu Selangor by-election, there were people there who didn't know that the state government had changed (in March 2008). Some said (Muhammad) Muhammad Taib (right) is still the menteri besar."

Focus of budget

The two-day dialogue is meant to collect input from all stakeholders in drafting the 2011 state budget.

Almost every member of the exco was present. They will lead the discussions based on four topics - housing and local government, poverty and welfare, investment, and generating new income.

According to Khalid, the focus of the budget will be on these issues.

He also revealed that the state government is drafting a three-year plan that will be announced when the budget is tabled in November.

Later, at a press conference, Khalid said the RM15 million allocation only took up one percent of the state annual revenue which was expected to hit RM1.5 billion this year.

At a PKR convention in May, Khalid, who was PKR Selangor head then, was lambasted for not promoting state activities with delegates urging him to utilise the state resources to promote PKR in Selangor.

On another matter, Khalid, in his speech, said the government will enhance the procedures governing sand mining in Selangor.

"Many are interested to portray the sand mining issue as a weakness of the state government so we will improve the current standard."

Khalid refused to divulge details saying they will be announced in a day or two.

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