

Perak MB unveils deficit budget
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Perak Menteri Besar Dr Zambry Abd Kadir today tabled a deficit budget totalling RM862.33 million for 2011 in the Perak state assembly, with RM589.33 for operating expenditure and RM273 million for development.

He said the RM29.91 million deficit in the budget, with the theme "the people-first budget with peace and prosperity across communities", did not mean that the state government was on the verge of bankruptcy.

"The state government had a huge amount in reserve, as much as RM753.6 million as at Nov 23 in terms of book value," he said.

Zambry told a news conference later that the reserve could sustain the state government for a year and that according to economists a three- or four-month reserve was enough.

He also dismissed any assumption that it was an election budget, saying that it was a social budget which gave emphasis to the government and private sectors to spur the state's economy.

Zambry also said that by the end of next year, the RM29.91 million deficit could be offset should the amount of revenue exceed the estimates, as was the case this year when the RM23.89 million deficit was offset by revenue higher than estimated.

He said that next year revenue was estimated to be RM832.4 million.

"It is most appropriate that the higher revenue be spent for the benefit of the people. As such, the development expenditure has been increased by RM94 million to RM273 million, up by 52.51 percent (from this year's)," he said.

Zambry said the state government had allocated RM4 million for food aid and RM1 million as cash aid during festivals for about 4,000 hardcore poor people.

RM4.5 mil for temples and churches

In upholding Islam as the official religion, some RM10 million had been allocated for projects to repair and renovate mosques and surau, he said.

As for other religions, he said, the state government had allocated RM4.5 million to repair Hindu temples, churches, Chinese temples, gurdwara (Sikh temples) and Siamese temples, as well as provided RM2 million for the construction of a modern and environment-friendly crematorium.

"In appreciation of and to empower the Orang Asli in Perak, the state government is increasing the allocation for their activities from RM1 million to RM1.5 million," he said.

Earlier, soon after the end of the question-and-answer session, S. Kesavan (PKR-Hutan Melintang) was suspended from attending the rest of the current sitting after Speaker Datuk

R. Ganesan found him to have misbehaved.

Kesavan was unhappy with Ganesan's explanation when his (Kesavan's) question could not be answered by the government side because of lack of time.

The assembly will sit again tomorrow.

- Bernama

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