

Raising quality of higher education

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In line with the 2023 Budget theme of "Developing Malaysia Madani", the Higher Education Ministry is committed to helping the government achieve the goals in the budget through the implementation of initiatives and programmes that will benefit all stakeholders, including the community and society.

The ministry welcomed the budget presented by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who is also finance minister, at Parliament last Friday.

The 2023 Budget, involving an allocation of RM388.1 billion, with RM289.1 billion for operating expenditure and RM99 billion for development expenditure including RM2 billion in contingency savings, demonstrated the government's commitment to supporting the ministry's efforts to transform higher education by strengthening the educational ecosystem.

The ministry expressed its appreciation for the government's support of the national higher education agenda with the allocation of an overall budget of RM15.1 billion – RM11.7 billion will go towards operating expenses while another RM 3.6 billion will be invested in the development of the ministry.

This allocation shows an increase of 5.7 per cent compared with the previous year.

IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE

The ministry's development expenditure has seen an increase of 22.9 per cent [RM 671 million].

This year, the ministry will focus on improving the facilities at public institutions of higher learning (IPTAs). This includes improving the infrastructure, buildings and equipment to raise the quality of higher education.

A budget of RM436 million has been allocated to improve infrastructure and replace old equipment in institutions.

In transforming higher education through new technology, the ministry will push the digitalisation agenda in all aspects of management, education, learning and services for the benefit of researchers, academics and students at private institutions of higher learning.

In addition, a fund of RM35 million will be used to improve Internet access at all IPTAs under the Malaysian Research & Education Network (MYREN) programme.

These digitalisation efforts are expected to increase accessibility to innovative, flexible and world-class quality learning for all stakeholders, no matter where they are located.

The ministry will also strengthen the research agenda to make Malaysia an excellent knowledge hub through a research and development budget of RM428 million allocated to the ministry as well as the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry.

With an additional allocation of RM50 million to carry out translational research, it is expected that the ministry can produce results that will benefit the government, community, industries and academia.

BUDGET INITIATIVES

The initiatives under the 2023 Budget that will fall under the purview of the ministry include a National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) loan repayment discount of up to 20 per cent for three months, beginning March 1.

In addition, PTPTN loan borrowers with a monthly income of RM1,800 and below can apply to defer repayment for a period of six months from March 1 onwards.

The government will allocate RM400 million to support the e-Tunai Belia Rahmah initiative, where youths aged 18 to 20 will receive RM200 each.

In the area of Technical and Vocational Education Training [TVET], the ministry will collaborate with leading government-linked companies to partially or fully take over operations of TVET institutions, such as community colleges and provide training programmes to meet the needs of the industry.

This includes collaborations with Petronas for the oil and gas cluster in Pengerang, Kimanis, Batu Rakit and Miri; DRB-HICOM for the automotive cluster in Pekan; Khazanah for



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim tabling the 2023 Budget in Parliament last Friday. The Higher Education Ministry received an allocation of RM 15.1 billion. PIC COURTESY OF HIGHER EDUCATION MINISTRY

the hotel cluster in Langkawi and the Sunway Group and Gamuda Bhd in the construction cluster.

The National Dual Training System will be reinforced and strengthened via improved cooperation and collaboration with private industries with an

allocation amounting to RM50 million to benefit more than 8,000 trainees.

To ease overcrowding at public healthcare facilities under the Health Ministry, patients from crowded hospitals will be outsourced to teaching hospitals under the ministry.