

Budget 2012 proves BN puts 'people first', says MCA
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By Debra Chong

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 7 — MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek today welcomed the prime minister's Budget 2012, saying the steps to pad the public's pocket in view of rising living costs worldwide proved the ruling Barisan Nasional was a "people first" government.

The former health minister lauded the Najib administration's initiatives to help the public cut down on spending unnecessarily, such as waiving school fees and tax on places of worship, while giving money directly to those who needed the extra cash the most.

"We laud the 'people first' initiative by the government to offer a one-off grant of RM500 to households with a monthly income of RM3,000," Dr Chua (picture) said in a media statement tonight.

He listed giving students money to buy books, RM100 million each for vernacular and Islamic schools and RM3,000 each to the country's former security personnel as among examples the government was showing it cared.

He also said the MCA was happy the government will continue to spend RM33.2 billion for all subsidies, incentives and assistance.

While he noted the world economy is not in a good shape due to the debt crisis and financial instability, he expressed confidence Malaysia may still achieve economic growth of between five per cent and 5.5 per cent next year and reduce the national deficit from 5.4 per cent to 4.7 per cent, through the government's Economy Transformation Programme (ETP).

The only concern he had was over the national public delivery system.

"We need to improve public delivery system so that the country can be more competitive. Hence, changes in remuneration and recruitment including an exit policy for low performers are needed," Dr Chua said.

He urged the government to encourage more private and public investment (PPI), saying the BN's second-biggest party is optimistic the PPI will likely rise by 15.9 per cent in private investment and seven per cent in public investment that is supported by foreign investment, the ETP and the 10th Malaysia Plan.

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