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Bernama - Budget 2021 A Catalyst For Country's Economy, Saviour For Those Affected By COVID-19 - Ministers

PRESS CITATIONS | 06 NOVEMBER 2020



KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 6 - Budget 2021 tabled by Finance Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz in the Dewan Rakyat today has been described as a catalyst for the country's economy and a saviour for those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong said the RM300 million allocation for the MY30 travel pass and new RM5 per month unlimited travel pass for school students, for example, could ease the financial burden of consumers and parents during this challenging time.

"The provision of training and re-employment programme for 8,000 staff involved in the aviation sector (which is the worst affected by COVID-19) will provide new job opportunities for them to ensure a more secure future," he said in a statement today.

Wee said public transport system development projects such as the Rapid Transit System Link (RTS Link) from Johor Bahru, Johor to Woodlands, Singapore; MRT3 (Mass Rapid Transit) in the Klang Valley and the Gemas-Johor Bahru Electrified Double-Track Railway will also help catalyse the economy, while increasing the efficiency of

in the Budget to defend Malaysia's interests as well as help the government succeed in terms of tackling the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hishammuddin said the allocation would also be used to strengthen the role of Malaysian Representative Offices abroad as well as the welfare of the ministry's staff worldwide.

Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Seri Reezal Merican Naina Merican described the budget as being comprehensive, with a serious emphasis on youth and sports development.

Reezal Merican was thankful that his ministry's views were considered in the Budget, which paid due attention to efforts to develop and restore sports ecosystem post-COVID-19.

Senior Works Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof said the Budget proved the government's commitment to continuing with the Pan Borneo Highway in Sabah and Sarawak, including the 21-km Serusop to Pituru package which was considered a 'missing link' in the project.

"The Budget also encourages the use of technology in the construction sector, in line with the ministry's aspiration to 'Digitise the National Construction Sector' beginning in 2021," he added.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba said the allocation for the health sector is expected to help the Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH) develop and expand the public health approach and primary healthcare, especially in the fight against COVID-19.

He said the allocation of RM 31.94 billion was also a boon to the ministry's long-term plans to inculcate a healthy lifestyle among Malaysians.

"We thank the government because in 2020, a total of RM1.8 billion had been provided as part of the 'whole government approach' in dealing with COVID-19 and another RM1 billion has been allocated in 2021 for us to step up screenings and improving public health with the supply of screening kits and reagents.

He was also grateful for the disbursement of RM600 allowance a month to frontliners until the end of the pandemic in recognition of their services.

Human Resources Minister Datuk Seri M. Saravanan said the Budget was a shot in the arm for the country's employment sector affected by COVID-19, including the Wage Subsidy programme, which was extended for another three months to help companies continue operations and avoid job losses.

"A total of RM1.5 billion is allocated for this programme, and it gives employees confidence with regards to employment opportunities," he said, adding that the programme had helped 2.7 million employees and more than 330,000 employers as of Oct 31.

Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Rina Mohd Harun said Budget 2021 was also women-friendly and cared for the vulnerable, including special programmes for Bumiputera women.

"Besides that, guidance programme, especially in the aspects of packaging and labeling, marketing strategies and business technical guidance will also be provided to more than 2,000 women entrepreneurs through the Micro Entrepreneur Business Development Programme or BizMe," he said.

Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri meanwhile said the Budget would indirectly enable more parties to contribute to the growth of the tourism, arts and culture industry, as well as for the ministry to plan more sustainable and competitive strategies in revitalising the industry.

Environment and Water Minister Datuk Seri Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man also praised the Budget for its significant emphasis on ensuring the sustainability of the environment and water in the country.

"An allocation of RM40 million over five years will be used to improve the monitoring aspect to ensure t' environmental criminals are brought to justice," he said.

"Taking into account the welfare and well-being of the people, I view Budget 2021 which was tabled today - especially for the Ministry of Housing and Local Government - as a budget that is inclusive, comprehensive and centered around the welfare of the people and the country's economic recovery," she said.

Meanwhile, Energy and Natural Resources Minister Datuk Dr Shamsul Anuar Nasarah said her ministry will optimise the allocation given to implement various programmes next year to ensure the sustainability of the electricity supply industry and governance of natural resources for the well-being of the country.

"The Ministry will continue to be committed in managing electricity supply strategically by optimising renewable energy and energy efficiency to ensure reliable, affordable and sustainable electricity supply," he said.

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