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Higher budget is for repairs



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JEMPOL: The record RM36.1bil budget allocated to the Health Ministry will partly be used to upgrade health facilities and rural clinics, some of which were built more than half a century ago.

“Some of these facilities, including those in Sabah and Sarawak, are made of wood and in bad shape. They need to be upgraded,” said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

“That is why we decided to give the ministry a higher budget so this can be done.”

Similarly, he said, a higher budget was given to Higher Education and Education ministries as there were schools which were in need of dire repairs.

“We also want to ensure needy undergrads at institutes of higher learning had tablets and allowances so they can focus on their studies,” Ismail Sabri said at the Jelajah Aspirasi Keluarga Malaysia event here.

As for the Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry, it said that its RM1.16bil allocation for the management and development of the tourism, art and culture reflected the government’s continuous post-pandemic efforts to restore and strengthen the country’s economy.

Finance Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, when tabling Budget 2023 on Friday, announced an allocation of RM200mil to strengthen the recovery of the tourism sector with incentives, promotion and marketing incentives, as well as RM90mil as matching grants, such as the Tourism Promotion Matching Grant (Gamelan), which involves promotion and marketing campaigns.

The government is also allocating RM25mil to provide incentives in the form of discounts, vouchers and rebates for accommodation and tourism packages and RM25mil for programmes to popularise arts, culture and heritage.

Other funds proposed are the RM500mil in Bank Negara Malaysia’s Tourism Financing (PTF) with an increase of financing size from RM300,000 to RM500,000; tourism infrastructure financing fund amounting to RM1bil to strengthen the momentum of the tourism sector’s recovery, as well as an allocation of RM10mil through ThinkCity to further transform Kuala Lumpur city centre into a creative and cultural hub.

Bernama reported that Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri said in a statement that the ministry would continue to take appropriate measures to protect and prepare the country for the effects of global development.

International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Azmin Ali said the ministry’s allocation of RM1.557bil, which includes managerial allocations of RM625.09mil and developmental allocation of RM932.45mil, would further empower its initiatives and 13 agencies to improve the economy.

He said the ministry would focus on sustainability of trade and development, durability of supply chain and human capital development.

The ministry, he said, would continue its efforts to maintain Malaysia as a destination for investments of high quality, high technology and green technology.

Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba said the ministry’s RM1.062bil allocation, with RM668mil allocated for management expenditure and RM393mil for development expenditure, would boost the role of science, technology and innovation towards strengthening the country’s economy and competitiveness.

The allocation was an increase of 17% compared to 2022.

Bernama also quoted Deputy Rural Development Minister Datuk Seri Abdul Rahman Mohamad as saying that allocations from Budget 2023 could empower some 7.3 million people in rural areas through various assistance, subsidies and other facilities.