Budget places emphasis on healthcare

ATTENTION will be given to improve the health of women, children, youth, the aged and disabled as well as to control infectious diseases and non-infectious diseases such as diabetes, heart diseases and cancer.

And to increase the number of old folks care centres and to improve their well-being, any person who constructs or buys a building to be used as an old folks care centre would be given a building allowance of 10% of the cost incurred for 10 years effective next year.

The old folks care centre must be approved by the Social Welfare Department.

The Government's stand is that a healthy rakyat will the continued success of its development programmes.

A total of RM7.55bil has been allocated for next year, an increase of nearly 20% over this year's budget, to continue upgrading the standard and quality of medical services and public health.

Of this, RM5.76bil is for operating expenditure and RM1.79bil for development.

Several new projects will be implemented, including the construction of 25 new hospitals such as in Serdang, Alor Star, Sungai Buloh, Ampang, Sungai Petani and Lahad Datu, as well as upgrading of 47 existing hospitals, 383 rural clinics and 81 health clinics.

A sum of RM24mil will be allocated to NGOs such as Hospice, National Kidney Foundation and others next year as well as grants for NGOs which are sincere in helping the country.

Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in explaining that the word "Belanjawan" may not be suitable because the Government does not only estimate expenditure but also revenue inflows.