

Budget 2021 important for Sabah Covid fight

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KOTA KINABALU: Budget 2021 is seen as an important instrument to empower Sabah to face the challenges posed by Covid-19 and in turn revive the state economy which has been battered by the pandemic.

Senior lecturer of the Science Social and Humanities Faculty in Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Associate Professor Dr Lee Kuok Tiung, said the special allocation of RM5.1 billion as well as an allocation for public facilities development, health and education could pave the way to rebuilding people's lives and stimulating the state economy.

"Don't look at Budget 2021 for Sabah only on the RM5.1 billion special allocation. The budget is bigger than that, such as RM50.4 billion for education which will benefit Sabah especially in addressing the dilapidated school issue," he told Bernama.

He said that when the country was facing declining income due to Covid-19 and the drop in prices of oil, oil palm and rubber, Budget 2021 also provided a path towards reviving the economies of the country and the state.

Sabah Medical Services Union executive secretary Laurence Vun said the RM17 billion allocation under the Covid-19 Fund for public health service was crucial to assist Sabah in facing the threat of the pandemic.

He said this includes the



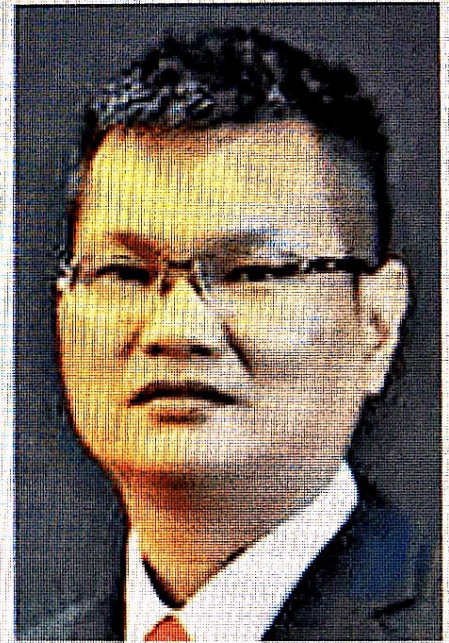
Pang

requirement for medical equipment, medicines, health facilities and health personnel.

Meanwhile, Federation of Sabah Industries economic advisor Datuk Dr Pang Teck Wai said the RM3.8 billion for the continuation of the much-awaited Pan Borneo Highway and the plan to upgrade Sepanggar Port into a regional container hub was vital for reviving the state economy post-Covid-19.

Pang said the two projects were fundamental for businesses in Sabah by reducing logistics cost, enhancing efficiency especially in the transportation sector and improving connectivity in the state, thus accelerating the economic recovery.

For Sabah Federation of



Lee

Chinese Associations president Tan Sri T.C. Goh, Budget 2021 is very crucial for Sabah as it is widely recognised as a "pandemic-fighting budget" to prepare for post-pandemic economic recovery.

He said Budget 2021 consists of grassroots-level assistance such as RM1,000 additional special grant for traders, which would also be extended to taxi drivers, e-hailing drivers, hired car operators and tour guides in the state to help cushion the impact of the pandemic to the tourism sector.

Goh said the distribution of government assistance to rural folks and RM41 million for the Native Customary Rights Programme in order to preserve native rights in Sabah would also help improve the people's lives. - Bernama