

Anwar wants Najib to re-table 2012 budget
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Budget 2012 must be re-tabled during the June sitting of Parliament, said Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim, in view of the current domestic economic situation.

Reiterating the call he had made to premier and Finance Minister Najib Abdul Razak at the last sitting, he pointed out that the government's growth projections have been rejected even by Bank Negara.

The heady five or six percent target touted by Najib has been brought down to a more realistic four or five percent, Anwar said in a statement today.

But since the budget expenditure for 2012 had been based on a much higher growth projection, Anwar said there is a possibility that the earlier data could mislead the public.

More seriously, he said, it may lead to a higher than expected national debt exceeding the constitutionally allowed 55 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP).

The BN's "irresponsible manipulations" to portray a lower deficit are not only inaccurate, he said, but "injurious" to economic indicators.

RM4,000 minimum household income

In addition, Anwar slammed Najib for misleading the public that Pakatan Rakyat has promised a RM4,000 minimum wage.

He said the opposition coalition proposes to shift the policy focus from the much abused 30 percent equity target for bumiputera currently pursued by BN towards an income-based economic target of RM4,000 minimum household income for each family within five years of Pakatan's administration.

"Najib has failed to distinguish the difference between a legally instituted minimum wage that employers are required by law to offer to all employees and a minimum household income that Pakatan strives to offer to the rakyat within five years in power."

Concluding his statement, Anwar again challenged Najib to a public debate on economic policies.

"If he is confident that Pakatan will not be able to deliver its economic promises, he must be bold enough to defend his conviction in a public debate.

"His refusal to debate with me on economic policies can only confirm the assertion that he is leading a weak government - economically, morally and intellectually," he added.

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