

Dr M reserves stand on whether to support Budget 2021

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PARLIAMENT | Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad has reserved his stand on whether to support or vote against the Supply Bill 2021, this after raising concerns over the source of funds for the RM322.5 billion budget.

"I reserve myself and my party from supporting or otherwise the Perikatan Nasional government's Budget 2021.

"I hope the suggestions made in this chamber will be given a place in the budget," the Langkawi MP said at the end of his debate on the budget in the Dewan Rakyat today.

Mahathir and three others from his yet to be registered Pejuang party - Jerlun MP Mukhriz Mahathir, Kubang Pasu MP Amiruddin Hamzah, and Sri Gading MP Shahrudin Salleh - currently sit with the independent bloc, after leaving their former party Bersatu.

In his debate, Mahathir noted, among other matters, that unlike previous budgets, no new taxes were introduced to fund Budget 2021.

The former prime minister had previously said that he would only support a "realistic budget", which should avoid a crisis should the government fail to raise enough funds to finance its operations.

Mahathir also took a swipe at the allocations announced to upgrade the offices of several ministries, pointing out that this could have been postponed to prioritise Covid-19 spendings.

"Development allocations for the various ministries recorded a 525 percent increase.

"The allocation for the Prime Minister's Department was also increased from RM7.9 billion this year to RM11.7 billion next year," he said.

Mahathir noted that the development funds included the construction of new ministry offices and to upgrade existing premises, giving the example of the RM125 million allocation to upgrade national broadcaster RTM's main building, Kompleks Angkasapuri, at Pantai Dalam in Kuala Lumpur.

"What is the need for RM125 million to upgrade Kompleks Angkasapuri? We must postpone this project," he said.

Other measures that could be taken could include reducing the current number of ministers in the cabinet to ensure a smoother administration, Mahathir added.

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