

Anwar: Budget 2021's passage does little to inspire confidence in PN

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Despite the passage of the Budget 2021 proposal at the Dewan Rakyat today, opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim argued that this does little to inspire confidence in the Perikatan Nasional-led government.

He claimed the budget remains fundamentally flawed and favours the government's political survival rather than the people's needs.

He also expressed disappointment that some MPs have voiced strong reservations regarding the budget but still voted in favour of it.

“Because the PN government has erroneously linked passage of the budget to the functioning of the civil service and payment of salaries, some MPs who oppose PN may have supported the budget to demonstrate their solidarity with millions of public servants who are equally impacted by the pandemic economy.

“It is disappointing that MPs who had expressed strong views against certain issues in the budget voted in support of the bill,” he said in a statement today.

The budget was passed with 111 votes in favour and 108 votes against. The 108 votes against the budget is the highest number of opposition votes tallied during the passage of Budget 2021.

Overall, the opposition has moved and lost 11 bloc votes.

Anwar said the passage of the budget proposal marks a return to a period where the government disregards acceptable standards of transparency, governance and prudent management of funds.

He highlighted that during the budget debates, various opposition MPs had sought clarification on issues such as the withdrawals from the Employees Provident Fund (EPF), lack of safety net for those without EPF contributions, the revival and rebranding of the Special Affairs Department (Jasa), and lack of support for many business owners.

And yet, many issues remain unaddressed. He said this is why opposition MPs have unanimously opposed the passage of the supply bill.

“This disturbing trend is highlighted by the recent downgrade by Fitch Ratings. In addition, the World Bank’s governance score for Malaysia has weakened in 2020, and we expect deterioration in other key ratings, including the corruption perception index and media freedom index.

“Investor confidence will certainly wane, and we will continue to see our neighbours in Asean outpace us in many development and economic indicators,” he added.

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