

Analysts: Ismail Sabri's moment to deliver

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KUALA LUMPUR: Budget 2022 is expected to get support from both sides of the divide, say political analysts.

The Budget will be tabled for first reading today and it will go through two weeks of debates at the policy stage, one week of ministerial replies and three weeks of debates at the committee stage.

Political and economic analyst Dr Oh Ei Sun also regarded Budget 2022 as a vote of confidence on Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob as the Prime Minister.

"So, you need a large amount of MPs voting for him in this Budget to show that he is the legitimate Prime Minister.

"But, I don't think that is a problem because most opposition parties have already pledged to support him despite the presence of a few characters," he said.

Nevertheless, Oh believed that there should not be any major hurdles for Ismail Sabri to pass Budget 2022 with a convincing parliamentary majority.

However, he does not regard Budget 2022 as a report card on Ismail Sabri's perfor-

mance as Prime Minister.

"Most Malaysians are just looking forward to financial assistance because people's livelihood have become very tough," he added.

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia political analyst Dr Azmi Hassan said the "numbers" that Ismail Sabri would be getting when Budget 2022 was put to a vote in Parliament would determine the strength of his government.

Azmi noted that after both signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU), the outcome of the vote would demonstrate not only Ismail Sabri's negotiation skills but also his future as Prime Minister.

"If Pakatan goes against the Budget, it doesn't spell a very good scenario for the Prime Minister.

"But if Pakatan either abstains or supports the Budget, then I think the Prime Minister is basically accepted by nearly all MPs," he said.

Regardless, Azmi said that the MOU that was signed between the government and Pakatan should ensure that Ismail Sabri remained in office until next June before the 15th General Election is called.

Last year, there were numerous attempts by the Opposition MPs to derail Budget 2021 after it called for bloc voting several times.

However, the government led by Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin narrowly won when 111 MPs voted aye and 108 MPs said nay during the third reading.

After the last minister finishes wrapping up debates at the policy stage, the Speaker presiding will call for a voice vote.

However, an MP can dispute results of the voice vote and if there are 15 MPs supporting the dispute, a bloc vote is then called.

Meanwhile, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Suffian Mansor also regarded Budget 2022 as an important step in Ismail Sabri's political career as an Umno vice-president.

"He must show his capabilities in leading the country," he said.

"It will also strengthen his position in Umno in the process."

Suffian, however, disagreed with Oh, and described Budget 2022 as a report card on the performance of Ismail Sabri's government.

"People want to see what actually his plan is for the economic recovery and how the people will benefit from it," he added.

Budget 2022 will be tabled by Finance Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz at the Dewan Rakyat this afternoon.