

# Budget approval allows for country to move forward, say analysts

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**PETALING JAYA:** The passing of the revised Budget 2023, according to political analysts, demonstrates that the current unity government led by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has a convincing majority, allowing the nation to move forward with various initiatives for the people.

Universiti Sains Malaysia professor of political sociology Dr Sivamurugan Pandian said the approval reflected the two-thirds majority support Anwar received in the Dewan Rakyat.

‘It is a sign to everyone that this majority (across various political blocs) brings about stability, allowing the nation to move towards other important developments.

‘It also shows how a government

with a strong majority can pass the budget easily,’ he said.

He said the Anwar-led government should also look into other aspects of improving the unity government’s perception and image among the public.

‘People are looking at results. The government has to find ways to promptly fulfil expectations (from Budget 2023).

‘Allocations towards target groups should be channelled efficiently in order to gain the public’s trust.

‘These actions will reflect that the government is united in transforming the people by taking (the necessary) action,’ he said, adding that Budget 2023 incentives presented a chance for the unity government to make inroads towards fence-sitters.

Despite Anwar having the sup-

port of lawmakers, Sivamurugan said the government had to continue working hard as state elections were around the corner.

‘The dock is ticking, and the government will need to find ways of implementing their initiatives to gain the public’s trust,’ he said.

Prof James Chin of the Asia Institute at the University of Tasmania, Australia, said the revised budget sent a strong signal to the international community that it was a reasonable one and not an election budget.

‘Of course there are key elements (in the budget) channelling funds to the poorest states, and it’s clear that those in the lower income brackets will get the goodies from this,’ he said when contacted.

He said most Malaysians expected Anwar to get the budget passed on Tuesday, noting that the

government would fall if it wasn’t passed.

Chin also reiterated that there was also no way to sink the coalition now.

‘Last time around, there was a vote of confidence in which Anwar had a two-thirds majority.

‘The only way the coalition can sink is if one of the big blocs moves out.

‘Everyone understands that it is crucial to release the allocations (in the budget), with most people confident of this as Anwar has the numbers,’ he said.

On Tuesday, the Dewan Rakyat passed the Supply Bill 2023, also known as Budget 2023, following a voice vote by MPs.

Deputy Speaker Alice Lau announced this after debates on the Higher Education Ministry and the Education Ministry’s allocations in

Budget 2023 at the committee stage were completed.

The revised Budget 2023, worth RM386.14bil, tabled by Anwar on Feb 24, is Malaysia’s largest federal budget to date.

It saw MPs debate policy for six days between Feb 27 and March 7, followed by two days of ministerial replies on March 8 and 9.

From March 13, committee stage debates on Budget 2023 continued for 10 days, with two or three ministries delivering their wind-up speeches after MPs spoke for five minutes each.

Last October, then-finance minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Abdul Aziz tabled a RM372.3bil for Budget 2023.

However, shortly after, Parliament was dissolved for the 15th General Election on Nov 19.