

## **What do I expect from Budget 2016?**

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**Budget 2016 is a ridiculous waste of time and I expect to be disappointed again.**

I received a phone call from my managing editor two days ago, requesting me to write an article from the perspective of an ordinary Malaysian. "Write about what you expect from Budget 2016," he said.

I clicked on the 'end call' button and took a deep breath. Honestly, this was not my cup of tea.

It's not like I am incapable of coming up with an article about the budget, no. With my management accountancy background and my role as the sole breadwinner and the financial planner of my household, it wasn't really a big deal.

But somehow it felt pointless.

I mean, every year, we anticipate the annual budget and finally when the Prime Minister delivers it, we sit glued to our TVs (well, at least I do). The next day, it is all over the media. Television stations air countless talk shows where financial experts discuss it to death. Radio stations invite listeners to call in and share their insights about the budget.

And then without fail every year, we get frustrated when the Auditor-General's Report unveils a litany of abuses and mishandling of funds — over-budget expenditures by ministries, unsuccessful projects, tenders granted to cronies, huge purchases gone obsolete, new expenditures and purchase of assets made without budget allocations.

It has been the same damn thing year after year, hasn't it?

What's the point of having budgets if we do not follow them? What's the point of announcing budgets in parliament if not everything is being disclosed? Has everything about 1MDB been disclosed? Was the plan to increase toll rates disclosed? Was the cost of cloud seeding every goddamn year due to goddamn haze disclosed? Was leasing our forest reserves to foreign companies disclosed?

In my honest opinion, it is ridiculous and frankly a waste of time to come up with Budget 2016 when no one seems to have any intention of honouring it.

Just look at Budget 2015. The cost of living was said to be the most vital issue of the budget. But look at us now, everything under our hazy sky has gone up in price. Whatever happened to the government's promise to implement measures to help ease the rising cost of living? Pensioners are having it tough. Single parents are struggling. Low-income groups are suffocating. But does anybody care?

Budget 2015 was also supposed to continue to focus on improving Malaysia's economic fundamentals. Being the last budget under the 10th Malaysia Plan, it was supposed to sustain growth.

Sustain growth, indeed? With our currency going down the longkang? Puh-leeze lah, even my toes are laughing.

I don't know about you, but I am done watching this wayang kulit. Budget or no budget, we, the ordinary Malaysians will still have to work our butts off to provide for our families. We will have to fork out our hard earned cash to dutifully pay our taxes but still have to resign ourselves to sky-rocketing prices and a generally deteriorating quality of life.

So what do I expect from Budget 2016?

I expect to get screwed again!

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