

On eve of Budget 2016, Najib says he won't be distracted
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Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak today said that he would not be "distracted" from tabling the Budget 2016 in Dewan Rakyat tomorrow, even as the opposition planned to unseat him by voting it down.

Najib said it was crucial that he saw his plan through, as it would help improve lives of Malaysians and constituted a step forward in turning Malaysia into a high-developed nation by 2020.

"I have a plan, and the plan is working. I will not be distracted, for there are serious consequences of not seeing the plan through," he said in a press release issued by the Prime Minister's Office.

"Budget 2016 will demonstrate how the plan will improve the lives of all Malaysians, and our next steps towards achieving Vision 2020 and achieving developed nation status. The future and welfare of all Malaysians is my top priority."

Opposition MPs today urged all lawmakers to join them in voting against the budget Najib would be tabling tomorrow, saying it was a chance for them to express their frustration with his leadership.

Veteran Umno lawmaker Tan Sri Abdul Shahrir Samad said that the opposition should oust the prime minister through the budget instead of submitting a motion of no-confidence.

The Barisan Nasional Backbenchers Club chairman said if the Budget 2016 failed to be passed in Dewan Rakyat, the prime minister would have to relinquish his post.

However, Najib today defended his decisions the past year, including introducing the unpopular goods and services tax (GST) and abolishing fuel subsidies.

"This year we have been focused on strengthening the resilience of our economy, managing the impact of external vulnerabilities, and safeguarding the well-being of the people," said Najib.

He added that the GST and subsidy rationalisation had turned out to be the saviour for Malaysia, especially during a time when government revenue had shrunk due to falling oil prices.

"Two things we have done to increase resilience is to introduce GST and rationalise subsidies. These decisions have been our saviour.

"GST collection is higher than anticipated due to higher compliance, and fortunately we have other resources – plus the government has been prudent with expenditure."

He said Malaysia's economic fundamentals remained strong with growth expected to be 4.5% to 5.5% this year, inflation at 2% to 2.5% and stable unemployment rate. – October 22, 2015.

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