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Ministers must show they can succeed where they failed previously

SHIVANI SUPRAMANI(/TAG/-/META/SHIVANI-SUPRAMANI) / 02 SEP 2021 / 10:30 H.



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PETALING JAYA: While the goals are obvious, doubts have been raised over the ability of the new Cabinet to achieve the desired results.

As an economist and a health expert pointed out, the economic and health crises are the priority but the return of the team that failed to make a difference leaves little room for confidence.

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Universiti Malaya economist Datuk Dr Rajah Rasiah said Finance Minister Tengku Zafrul Aziz continues to pursue a strategy to ensure profits for the banking sector when the priority should be ensuring the survival of businesses.

“Even Economics Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed’s initiatives such as the Prihatin and Penjana have yielded little,” he told theSun.

Malaysian Medical Association president Datuk Dr M. Subramaniam said little has changed since the new Cabinet line-up was announced, but conceded that it is still in the early days.

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Rajah said for a start, the Cabinet must be transparent on how it will address the economic slowdown.

Referring to the new Cabinet as “old wine in a new bottle”, he expressed doubt that things would be any different from before the rise of the new government under Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

Referring to the strategies still pursued by the finance minister, Rajah said most countries would adopt the Keynesian policy, that helps the masses to recover.

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“This was the strategy that helped Malaysia recover from the 1997/1998 global economic crisis. We introduced capital controls, and made banks lend a certain portfolio of their funds with capped interests to small and medium enterprises,” he said.

However, he agreed that some strategies introduced by the previous government should be retained, such as the moratorium on repayment of bank loans. He also proposed that banks be required to manage with zero profits while the country is still experiencing difficulties.

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On Ismail Sabri’s pledge to require his ministers to prove themselves with measurable results within their first 100 days in office, Rajah said it is difficult to believe that the same ministers would succeed now when they had failed previously. We use cookies on our website to give you a better experience, improve performance, for analytics, and to show you relevant tailored adverts. By Clicking “OK” or by clicking into any content on this site, you agree to allow cookies to be placed. To find out more, read our [Privacy policy\(/services/private-policy\)](#)

He cited the objective to minimise impoverishment among the B40 and lower M40 groups as an example of the failures.

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Subramaniam said it would be “hard to say” if a lot would change with the new Cabinet, given that it largely comprises the same people from the previous team.

“Besides a few switches here and there, not much has changed.”

Nonetheless, he expressed confidence that Khairy Jamaluddin would make a good health minister as he had proven himself in the youth and sports portfolio and more recently in the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry.

“I think we can expect fresh ideas from him, which is exactly what we need if we are to resolve issues such as that of contract medical officers,” he added.

Subramaniam said all ministers will need to be in touch with the situation on the ground and understand the struggles faced by the people so that they can come up with better policies.

He stressed that ministries should emphasise the importance of vaccination and strict adherence to standard operating procedures for all economic sectors.

“Funds will be needed to help those who have lost their jobs and income. These are the immediate needs that must be taken care of in the first 100 days.”

He said steps must also be taken to ensure all migrant workers are inoculated against Covid-19.

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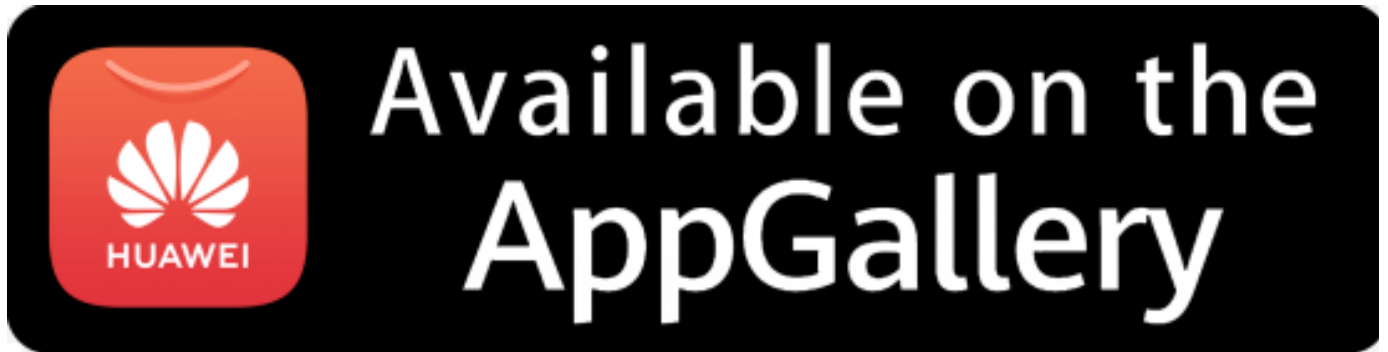
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