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Budget 2022 will ensure continued efforts to strengthen national healthcare system - PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 27 -The 2022 Budget to be tabled in Parliament on Friday will ensure continued efforts to strengthen the national healthcare system, including emphasising research and development (R&D) so that the country is prepared in the event of a new wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said apart from that, Budget 2022 would also focus on protecting, restoring the lives and livelihoods of the people and businesses as well as rebuilding the country's resilience and spur more sustainable post-pandemic reforms.

He said the R&D included for production of COVID-19 vaccines not only for the use of the people, but to also have the potential to be exported to countries in need.

"Now we depend on vaccines from other countries, there was a time when vaccines (ordered) were so late (in arriving) that it affected our National COVID-19 Immunisation Programme.

"Therefore, R&D needs to be strengthened to produce not only COVID-19 vaccines but many other vaccines besides

new medicinal drugs," he said at the prime minister's interview session with the media on Budget 2022, here, today.

According to the prime minister, even though more than 70 per cent of the country's population has been vaccinated, it is not a reason to be complacent but instead still necessary to be careful and continue to follow COVID-19 prevention standard operating procedures (SOP).

He added that in the 12th Malaysia Plan (12MP) (2021-2025), one of the government's priorities in the medium to long term is to restructure the country's healthcare system.

He said the Malaysian Healthcare System Reform Blueprint would be introduced to transform the country's healthcare system.

Elaborating further on Budget 2022 where the health sector is concerned, Ismail Sabri said he had asked the Finance Ministry to place emphasis not only on the construction of new hospitals, but also rural clinics.

He said the construction of rural clinics, especially in Sabah and Sarawak, was very important due to the distant location of hospitals and the difficult routes that have to be travelled to obtain services at health facilities.

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