

# Abdulah: 2026 budget will set Govt's course



File: Movement for Social Justice political leader David Abdulah

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Movement for Social Justice (MSJ) political leader David Abdulah says the upcoming national budget, the first to be presented by the new United National Congress (UNC) administration, is consequential, serving as a pivotal test of the government's ability to navigate a precarious financial landscape and deliver on key campaign promises.

Speaking on CNC3's Morning Brew programme yesterday, Abdulah noted the administration inherited a difficult economic situation, one that was highlighted during the 2025 general election campaign and has since been publicly acknowledged.

"The situation with forex is a problem. The issue of employment arrangements, given the fact that CEPEP was virtually closed down, URP has been virtually closed down, the Reforestation programme closed down, and so on. People want to know what plans there are by the Government to restructure, because they claim they would restructure," Abdulah said.

He noted that three to four months have passed since the election, and the Government has not made any announcements about what that restructuring would look like.

"So people are anticipating all of that, and how they're going to diversify the economy. What are the quick wins to deal with the forex problem? And what are the more medium term plans to get economic growth going," Abdulah added.

The 2026 budget would also be seen as a crucial determinant of the administration's trajectory,

especially when finances are tight, requiring the Government to manage expenditure while creating room for investment and growth.

“They gave themselves a sixmonth window to come back with a particular new plan for the nation, where they are saying they want it to be more sustainable and more structured, as it were and that window has virtually closed now. They came in at the end of April, and by the time the budget is passed, we’ll be at the end of October, so that’s six months. So I think that window has closed, and people can’t hold strain any longer. People want to know how are they going to earn a bread when the day comes,” Abdulah explained.

He added the budget is expected to shed light on how the Government intends to deal with industrial relations matters, including outstanding collective agreements as well as new legislative matters (bills and amendments) that ministers intend to bring to Parliament in the coming fiscal year.

“I think a lot is going to be said in terms of this Government’s ability to take T&T to a better place and to improve people’s lives. A lot is going to be learned in this first budget,” Abdulah said as he drew parallels to the severe austerity measures of the 1987 budget— which saw the NAR government remove the Cost of Living Allowance and later introduce Value-Added Tax.