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No pie in the sky in BN manifesto, just a record of its successes

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THE Barisan Nasional does not make promises it cannot keep. That is why it is not promising the people the sky, the unattainable.

When the BN goes down to the people, it is confident the people will make it the party of their choice to form the next Government.

It knows therefore that it is bound by every word and every pledge embodied in its manifesto.

"We don't speak with forked tongue-lah. We are not vague. We are clear on what we can give. We make promises that we know we can fulfil. We are not telling the people that we can give them everything they want, just what we are able to.

"One thing is for certain. We are not lying to them or to ourselves," said a veteran BN campaigner, echoing the sentiments of BN leaders about what the coalition is pledging to do for the people and country.

On Sunday night, Prime Minister and BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad unveiled the BN manifesto, "Malaysia - Free, United, Successful" in Kuala Lumpur.

The three simple words that are part of the manifesto's title, Dr Mahathir said, encompass all there is to know about what the BN has done in the past and what it will continue to do if the people give it their vote of confidence again.

If supporters of the Alternative Front had expected the BN to attempt to outmatch its manifesto which it launched much earlier, they were dead wrong.

"The manifesto is just a list of BN's successes. Nothing exciting or dramatic. If that's what they expected ... then it can probably be described as a whimper," said an Umno member.

But then, the BN is not inclined to the theatrical. Just plain hard facts. Dr Mahathir has alluded that it is not the BN's style to make promises during an election merely to fish for votes.

He said the BN was unlike the Opposition which realised that it could not form the Government and therefore was ready to make fantastic promises that were usually very vague and open to misinterpretation.

Introducing the BN manifesto on Sunday night, the Prime Minister explained why the language used in it was simple.

"This is so that the people will understand and not misinterpret us. We will also be bound by our promises," he said.

When promises can be misinterpreted and therefore misunderstood, one can very easily get out of keeping them, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the BN manifesto uses words that are short and to the point.

"This will help people understand what the BN will do (for them)," he said.

That is why, Dr Mahathir said, the Opposition could make all kinds of promises because it knows it does not have to keep them.

And just in case it wins, he added, it knew that it did not have to keep them because the promises made were so vague.

The BN manifesto is 20 pages cover to cover and full of pictures. It is holder and reader-friendly in light semi-glossy paper that makes for easy reading.

Well, correction. You really don't have to read it. Just a glimpse through it tells you clearly and succinctly what the BN has done and will

do for you.

The pictures tell stories of BN's successes since independence including the country's fight against communist terrorists decades ago and its war against rogue currency traders.

It explains how and why the country and its people have been free from all forms of colonialism, how they are united and what its successes are.

The BN promises continued freedom, unity and success if the people once again vote it into power on Nov 29.

A BN veteran said that the coalition might be impressing voters with how attainable its promises are as they are worded in simple language.

"But the truth is, the BN has made almost impossible dreams come true. Make no mistake about that."

The record, as has been oft-said, speaks for itself.

Dr Mahathir, who launched the manifesto in the presence of BN component party leaders, candidates and supporters, stressed the value of being a free nation and a free people.

He warned of the danger of new forms of recolonisation and the importance of being a free nation to be strong to resist them.

While the BN manifesto is about Malaysia's socio-economic and political successes, that of the Alternative Front contains a pledge to address injustices which it perceives to be plaguing the country.

The Front has detailed its plan to create a just society and it will obviously have to either make major changes or abolish existing government policies in order to do this.

Nothing of course is impossible. But then he that promises too much means nothing.

At the end of the day, the consideration is whether or not we want to make things better for ourselves and our children, and whether or not we want this peace, stability and economic progress to continue.

Therefore, the question we have to ask ourselves is who can give us that and more?

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