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Opposition in final stage of preparing common manifesto

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ALOR STAR, Fri. - The DAP, Pas, Parti Keadilan Rakyat and Parti Rakyat Malaysia are in the final stage of preparing a common manifesto to challenge Barisan Nasional in the next general election.

Opposition leader and DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang said the main point of the common manifesto was to challenge the ruling coalition in a one-to-one fight.

"We are working on it and hope it won't be too long before it is ready," he told reporters after a ceramah at Dewan Tow Boo Keong here last night.

The manifesto is not likely to accommodate Pas' principal aim of setting up an Islamic State because Pas seems to have conceded on this point.

The party's spiritual leader Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, speaking after his weekly ceramah in Kota Baru today, said he was willing to drop the creation of an Islamic State slogan from a common manifesto for the opposition.

But he said Pas' original aim towards setting up an Islamic State remained unchanged.

"The removal of the slogan is only one of the ways for Pas to get closer to the non-Muslims to spread Islam," he said.

This is not the first time that the opposition has come up with the idea of a common manifesto.

In the 1990 general election, the DAP, Semangat 46, Parti Rakyat Malaysia and the Indian Progressive Party drew up their common manifesto under the Gagasan Rakyat.

Lim said opposition parties realised they were facing a new unprecedented political situation in the country where the people had shown they were more mature than the political leadership of BN.

He said this was evident from the fact that people of all races were coming together for the common cause of justice.

Speakers at the ceramah held at Tow Boo Keong Hall, included DAP vice-president Ahmad Nor and Kedah Keadilan chief Datuk Syeikh Azmi Ismail.

On Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's recent statement that the coming general election would be the dirtiest ever, Lim said opposition parties were committed in ensuring there was no trouble and unrest when elections were held.

"All opposition parties and their supporters are committed in ensuring this does not happen." Earlier, Lim asked the people to remain committed in delivering a blow to the BN in the next election.

He added the election would provide an opportunity for the people to vote out the BN, under which rule he claimed many things had gone wrong.

"Under BN, justice has become irrelevant, there is selective prosecution where they pick and choose whom to charge.

"Now, the Government has resorted to selective release of information which is made known to the people for their (BN's) own purposes," he alleged, adding these were just some of the injustices which needed to be changed.

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