

Najib: BN delivers while Pakatan only promises
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Fresh from announcing the dismantling of the dreaded Internal Security Act (ISA), Prime Minister Najib Razak boasted that only BN was capable of delivering real change and instituting reform.

Speaking at a Hari Raya gathering in Kuala Selangor late last night, Najib accused rival Pakatan Rakyat of making empty promises, using Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim's infamous claim that the BN federal government would fall on Sept 16, 2008 as an example.

"The opposition tries to go on the platform of change with the slogan 'reformasi'... there is no need for promises by the opposition, (BN) can implement change," he told a crowd of more than 5,000.

Najib said his administration had proven that BN was at the forefront of change when it promised to abolish both the ISA and the Emergency proclamations in his Malaysia Day speech last week.

He said that in contrast, Anwar had told the "biggest lie in the nation's history" three years ago.

"Don't forget, when we celebrate Malaysia Day on Sept 16, (remember) who made the biggest lie that he would purportedly form government and that BN would collapse," he said.

Don't hide from the people

Najib warned his audience that supporting Pakatan would be akin to gambling away their future.

"We have the power to bring change... BN brings hope to the people - of reforms now and the near future," he said.

The event was part of the closing ceremony for a BN State Legislative Assembly Backbenchers' Club retreat in Kuala Lumpur.

An Information Ministry rostrum was used on stage and dinner participants were asked to sing the BN anthem.

Club chief Nadzri Ismail said the assemblypersons were assigned to 73 voting districts in Selangor, and were staying with 'foster families' for the retreat that ends today.

"Voting district Hari Raya celebrations yesterday managed to gather on average of 1,000 people per district, amounting to 73,000 people," he said.

In his speech earlier, Najib praised the club, adding that the assemblypersons have humbled themselves by staying at the homes of ordinary Malaysians in the parliamentary constituency currently held by Dzulkefly Ahmad of PAS.

He advised the backbenchers and BN leaders to work "extra hard so people will love (BN) more".

"If we act as if we are more special than others, then the people will feel disgust for us," he said.

He also warned leaders against making promises they could not fulfill and to be more publicly accessible.

"Don't hide your car behind the house and instruct your wife to tell people you're not home. This is actually a true story," he lamented.

Roughing it out in parking lot

Najib, who is also Selangor BN chief, also called on the coalition to learn from the "bitter experience" of being the opposition in the state.

"We are holding this event in the compound of Tesco, at a hypermarket's parking lot, because the state halls belong to someone else now.

"That's the fate of opposition parties, but I hope this bitter experience will strengthen our resolve to emerge as the ruling coalition in the next election," he said.

The event was also attended by Selangor Opposition Leader Satim Diman, Perak MB Zambry Abdul Kadir, Selangor MCA chief Donald Lim and Selangor Gerakan chief A Kohilan Pillay.

Notably absent was Selangor BN deputy liaison chief Noh Omar.

The BN event also saw participation from Gerakan 1Malaysia (Gema), a youth organisation that led a sing-along of the '1Malaysia' song.

Many in the audience were seen waving their hands to the beat and showing a 'one' sign to symbolise 1Malaysia.

Gema is an initiative of BN-linked think-tank Inmind and the Selangor Special Affairs Department (Jasa) under the Information, Communication and Culture Ministry.

The festivities, which included cultural performances, attracted a multicultural crowd of diverse ages, including young families.