

**Khairy on Pakatan promises: Show us the money**  
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Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar has argued that the slew of election promises offered by Pakatan Rakyat, which amount to a whopping RM206.5 billion in the first year alone, are nowhere near reality.

"They have not really explained how they are going to pay for its electoral promises. And just to put it on the record once again - its electoral promises amount to a whopping RM206.5 billion in the first year alone.

"This includes not just writing off the higher education loans and reducing taxes on cars, but these Johnny-come-lately ideas must be read together with earlier pledges contained in its Buku Jingga," said Khairy in his latest column in The Edge, which has been posted in his blog.

The Rembau MP summed up all the promises namely abolition of tolls (RM50 billion), Free WiFi (RM1.2 billion), petroleum royalties for East Malaysia (RM12.5 billion), minimum RM4,000 monthly income to all households (RM93.9 billion), cutting out excise duty and tax on car sales (RM8.0 billion), free education and PTPTN write-off (RM18.5 billion), teachers' salaries (RM2.4 billion), and taking over water industry (RM20 billion).

"And this doesn't even include the standard talking point of an immediate reduction in the price of petrol should it take over the government.

"Depending on the reduction, this could cost hundreds of millions on top of whatever has already been quantified in the table."

Almost 90 percent

Khairy then elaborated that the opposition's electoral promises alone account for almost 90 percent of the RM232.8 billion federal government's budget in 2012.

"So if it were to fulfill its promises in the first year of office, the government would effectively not have enough money to pay the salaries of teachers, doctors, nurses, police and army personnel, let alone have the funds for building roads, schools, hospitals or providing welfare assistance to the poor.

"Most of the money would have been used to deliver on its Jingga promises."

Should Pakatan decided to borrow more money to fund its promises and keep government going, the fiscal deficit would balloon to more than 25 percent of GDP and Malaysia would effectively be bankrupt within the first two years, warned Khairy.

Pakatan's classic argument that it will "get rid of corruption" to pay for its promises also fails to bring the opposition anywhere close to their target, he said.

"Let's analyse the 2012 federal budget. Of the total RM232.8 billion that was originally budgeted, RM148.5 billion (63.8 percent of the total budget) was earmarked for salaries of civil servants as well as fixed charges and grants such as subsidies, servicing debt, scholarships, research grants and funds for state governments.

"These are all fixed charges or payments. That leaves RM84.3 billion for procurement-related spending, whether it is purchasing supplies, services and assets or paying for projects under development expenditure.

"Since corruption and leakages can only occur for procurement-related expenditure as opposed to fixed charges like salaries, any savings can only be made from this portion of the budget.

"If you get 10 percent savings from procurement, that would be just RM 8.43 billion extra - hardly enough to pay for the opposition's election promises," Khairy contended, adding that even the RM84.3 billion budget related to procurement expenditure could not pay for Pakatan's promises to Putrajaya.

Hence how would Pakatan raise money for those promises, he queried.

"Will they borrow more? What programmes will it cancel? Which projects will it scale down? Which schools and hospitals will it not build? What taxes will go up? How many civil servants will it lay off?"

Unless the opposition can answer these hard questions and give explanations, Khairy stressed, the people can safely assume that either Pakatan will drive Malaysia to ruin, or it actually has no intention of fulfilling its promises because it knows it simply can't pay for them.