

Najib's appeal - a day late, a dollar short
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COMMENT Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has pleaded with the Indian Malaysian community to support the BN in the 13th general elections. He said he will ensure that the community enjoys a better future, equal to that of the other communities.

He said he will discuss with deputy premier and Education Minister Muhyiddin Yassin the possibility of converting Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Tamil - which do not receive government aid - to fully aided schools in stages.

Najib also said Tafe College will be upgraded to a university college status because it has the capability to provide technical expertise required by the nation.

And the government will allocate funds to upgrade community centres and crematoriums and raise the community's equity participation to 3 percent.

All this can only be done after the next general election, provided Najib remains in office.

But Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who represents Umno hardliners, has called on Najib to relinquish his post if he is unable to secure a two-thirds majority for the BN. A two-thirds majority for the BN and winning back Selangor have not been predicted by any independent analyst so far.

As it stands, Najib's position after the general election is not feasible and is untenable. Even if the BN wins, how much support and authority will he have in Umno? So can he fulfil his pledges?

The Indian Malaysian community has heard election promises in the past but nothing has changed. In 1970s MIC-BN leaders had promised a 3 percent economic stake. But Indian economic wealth had dropped to 1.2 percent by 2000. Najib has recycled the 3 percent figure now when he has been premier since 2009.

Najib should also seek the consent of Umno and the Malay bureaucracy before he makes promises. Otherwise when Indian Malaysians go to government departments, counter clerks will say that they have not received orders from those higher up.

Indian Malaysians have had enough of political rhetoric - they need delivery of promises.

The pledge to turn all partially aided schools to fully aided ones rings hollow. Even now, fully aided Tamil schools have to appeal to community to refurbish dilapidated signboards and to repair toilets. They don't even get funds on time but up to four years later.

Tamil schools have to run to the MIC for assistance, when national schools get assistance from the Education Ministry.

Why the double standards, Mr Prime Minister? Why not set up a department in the ministry to develop, maintain and formulate a progressive curriculum so that every Tamil school student can be admitted to Form One and not drop out of secondary school?

Trust betrayed repeatedly

AIMST University was established with MIC grassroots' support and government funds. Malay students get bumiputra quotas and Chinese students can pay their own way. But many Indian Malaysian students cannot afford to pay the fees, and must borrow from the PTPTN.

How will converting Tafe College to university college status help these students? Mr prime minister, they need scholarships, places in universities, job opportunities and recognition that they are truly Malaysians.

Najib has asked for trust (nambikai) time and again. For the past 55 years, the trust of Indian Malaysians in the BN has been taken for granted and their rights have been denied and ignored. Many are still waiting for a blue MyKad and rightful treatment at government offices.

MIC leaders have betrayed the community's trust once too often. But Najib still surrounds himself with these untrustworthy characters and asks the community to trust him. Will they? Can he be trusted in the first place?

The BN federal government spends about RM500 million every year on BTN programmes to indoctrinate civil servants on Malay supremacy. Would they allocate funds to upgrade community centres and crematoriums?

The prime minister's 1Malaysia ponggal speech may be music to MIC/PPP/IPF leaders but large numbers of Indians in Malaysia are more aware now of what is actually going on.

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