

Anwar: Indian issues to be listed in Pakatan manifesto
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Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim said he has heard the feedback from the Indian community and will add specific details on their needs in the Pakatan Rakyat manifesto.

"I have been in many discussions with leaders of the Indian community since last week to consider their point of view," said Anwar in a statement today, detailing a number of issues affecting the community.

"All these (concerns) are already in Manifesto Rakyat, which is built on all the policies and announcements made by Pakatan Rakyat previously.

"Still, to strengthen our commitment to explicitly state our commitment, these matters will be detailed further in the Manifesto Rakyat for distribution, as urged by groups who have expressed their position to us," he said.

Specifically, he elaborated on points directly relating to the Indian issues:

1. Resolving the "longstanding issue of stateless people" in Malaysia, without excluding Indians, in the first 100 days of Pakatan's administration.
2. Technical training and job opportunities for school leavers, stressing the major beneficiaries to be the Indian community.
3. Ensuring all Tamil schools will be fully funded and infrastructure comparable to the national education standards.
4. A government National Housing Board to build affordable homes that includes focus on helping build freehold homes for ex-estate workers around the country.

Anwar also said the police force would be reformed and the long-awaited Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC) would be set up.

Pakatan's manifesto, that the coalition claims takes a needs based approach to benefit all Malaysians including the Indians, had failed to impress the Tamil community.

In particular, Hindraf leaders slammed the manifesto for leaving out specific concerns of the community, although the manifesto mentioned specifically issues relating to other ethnic communities like the Chinese and Orang Asli.

Needs based approach fundamental

Anwar stressed that these details did not divert the coalition from its commitment to its

needs-based approach to governance.

"I am open to further proposals from various groups to refine further the manifesto, as long as they do not alter the principle policies of Pakatan Rakyat to reject racial politics and prioritise good governance and justice for the people," he said.

"The failure of many Barisan Nasional programmes is due to poor reception and broad cooperation brought by each programme being race-based.

"That is why I defend a needs-based approach for only all-inclusive programmes can be implemented successfully," said Anwar.

As an example, he said their Rakyat Apprenticeship Scheme to create jobs for school leavers required the cooperation of all segments of society and all races.

"This smart partnership will enable employers to tap the local human resource at a cheaper rate because the government will contribute to the majority of the trainee's cost during their apprenticeship.

"In this way the government has a platform to train hundreds of thousands of young people in a programme to improve their low-income families socio-economic standings, while utilising young people in our economy.

"If the programmes appear to be tailor made for one race, it will quickly discourage the participation of other races for it only caters to the needs on one race only," said Anwar.

Dare Najib debate manifesto?

Meanwhile the PKR de facto leader also slammed his BN critics for attacking the manifesto "based on outdated propaganda accompanied by deceiving figures to confuse the people".

For example, he said, while BN questioned Pakatan's financial prudence in aiming to cancel toll payments, the ruling party itself had allegedly already overspent its own projections for the BR1M handouts.

Instead, he said, BN should support its accusations against the manifesto with figures and for its leader Prime Minister Najib Razak to debate him on it face to face.

"I am told that Najib Razak will be rebutting Manifesto Rakyat soon. I'm confident the people would prefer him giving his rebuttals in a live policy debate rather than offering them in isolation as he often does," said Anwar.

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