

## **Yet again, PM dishes out more goodies**

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**By Hazlan Zakaria**

With the election fever heating up, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak continues his election walkabout, this time giving more goodies to employees of seven statutory bodies.

"Today I stand in front of you with confidence. My conscience is clear... This is based on a success story... not a failed state.

"If we take good care of the workers and are not too stingy, workers will respond." Najib told more than 8,000 employees of statutory bodies present at a gathering in Kuala Lumpur today.

The remuneration schemes of employees in statutory bodies were separated from those in the civil service during the massive privatisation drives of the government in the 1990s.

Najib stressed he was not giving away the goodies because he was being populist, as certain quarters accused, but because the government managed to develop the economy and now has enough prosperity to share the bounty with the rakyat.

"We are a government that listens to the people, feels the pulse of workers and takes care of the welfare of the rakyat," said Najib when announcing the goodies for employees of the seven statutory bodies.

Pension scheme for them

These are the measures he announced to return the wayward agencies from their privatised remuneration schemes to civil service benefits standards:

- 1) A pension scheme for staff of the seven agencies, to be sourced from the employer's portion of the Employees Provident Fund contribution;
- 2) Fixed housing allowance;
- 3) Gratuity upon retirement; and
- 4) Higher employer's EPF contributions, based on length of service.

Some 40,000 employees of pilgrimage fund Tabung Haji, military trust LTAT, national savings bank BSN, the EPF, social welfare organisation Perkeso, ex-soldiers welfare body Perhebat and the Internal Revenue Board will benefit from the move.

"I have kept my promise, when the time comes can you fulfil your promise to me?" asked Najib in his trademark "I help you, you help me" sign off.

The PM's words were met with thunderous applause from the highly excited crowd, all

dressed in red, wildly waving small Malaysian flags and "I Love PM" banners.

The crowd rose on their feet numerous times to shout "I love PM" and executing the "Malaysian Wave", of waving flags and placards.

Najib's announcement follows a memorandum sent by a joint body representing workers of the statutory bodies, led by its president Tuan Azman Tuan Yaacob, who lamented that increasing service benefits have caused those in the privatised schemes to lose out.

However no deadline was set to implementation of the goodies, as the committees representing the employees of the seven agencies will have raise the measures announced by Najib with their administrations to iron out the kinks and to work out the implementation.

Cuepacs offers consultation

The civil service union Cuepacs has agreed to be consulted in the exercise.

The seven statutory bodies were corporatised during the administration of former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad more than 20 years ago, with the view to increasing government efficiency.

The seven agencies are the third pit-stop in Najib's electoral tour of government agencies and government-linked companies (GLCs), with the employees of bumiputera investment fund Permodalan Nasional Bhd (PNB) and telecommunications giant Telekom Malaysia Bhd (TM) having been given cash incentives earlier, during separate visits by Najib.

On March 18, Najib announced an extra one month's salary bonus for 2012 for the more than 200,000 permanent and contract staff of PNB and the next day announced a one-off consolation payment of RM500 to 27,000 TM employees.

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