

'BN mooting stop-gap measures on cost of living'

MalaysiaKini.com

April 9, 2013

Measures proposed in the BN manifesto to address the cost of living are more short-term solutions and do not have a lasting impact, a think-tank said today.

According to Pakatan Rakyat-linked Political Studies for Change (KPRU), the BN manifesto launched on Saturday was putting a "political brand name" on Malaysians' needs, instead of addressing structural issues which stop Malaysians from raising their standards of living.

"Where Pakatan plans to decrease the water and electrical charges as an effort to reduce the financial burden faced by Malaysians, (BN chief) Najib (Abdul Razak) continues with cash handouts that will not alleviate poor Malaysians from poverty," it said in a statement.

It added that by rolling out more Kedai Rakyat 1Malaysia discount stores, BN is "reject(ing) the rights of Malaysians to access items of good quality at reasonable prices".

"(Najib) has instead encouraged a situation of low quality, low items, and disregarded the... good health of Malaysians in the long term," it said.

Instead, the statement read, Pakatan is proposing the abolition of monopolies in order to reduce market prices for goods without the need to set up discount stores.

It added that raising book voucher assistance by RM50 does not deal with the problem of tertiary students who are saddled with loans to cover high fees, particularly in private institutions.

This is compared to Pakatan's proposal of providing subsistence allowance and abolishing the National Higher Education Fund (PTPTN) loans, including for students at private institutions.

Instead, Pakatan proposes to subsidise students at private institutions by the same amount which the government spends on students undertaking a comparable course at a public institution.

The people of Sabah and Sarawak too, they added, will continue to face higher costs of living due to the continuation of the cabotage policy, despite the pledge to standardise the price of basic goods nationwide.

KPRU also argued that the BN also failed to detail how it plans to reduce car prices by 20 to 30 percent, without gradually abolishing excise taxes as proposed by Pakatan.

However, the think-tank did concede that BN's proposal to build a million affordable houses, and 500,000 more homes priced at at least 20 percent under market, eclipses the Pakatan proposal.

Pakatan has proposed to build 150,000 affordable homes with a price cap of RM75,000 for low-cost homes and RM250,000 for medium-cost homes.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
Source: <http://www.malysiakini.com/news/226247>