

Final day attempt to capture votes
Malaysiakini.com
Mar 07, 2008
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When a party has money, it shows.

On the eve of election, Barisan Nasional has put up three pages of advertisements in all the major dailies in English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil. MCPX

bn only one choice adThe first advertisement exuded one clear message - there is "Only One Choice" when it comes to the rakyat to cast their vote.

The following double-page spread lauded the accomplishments in a BN checklist format.

Sixty-six items were ticked as achievements that had benefited the people.

These encompass economy, development, infrastructure, income tax, agriculture, healthcare, education, public service, religion and social issues.

Here are 10 of the notable ones:

- * GDP grew by 18 percent from RM427 billion to RM504 billion (the latest estimate)
- * Maintained price controls on essential items and expended RM43.4 billion in subsidies (2007) to mitigate rising cost
- * International trade grew 26 percent from RM881 billion to RM1.11 trillion
- * Increased agriculture incomes; eg. padi farmers mean monthly income increased 27 percent to RM1,549; rubber smallholders increased 34 percent to RM1,727
- * Launched the Education Blueprint 2006-2010 and the Higher Education Strategic Plan to raise education standards.
- * Tax relief of up to RM5,000 for each disabled child
- * Established the Royal Commission to enhance the Operation and Management of the Police, leading to over 85 percent of the commission's proposals being carried out
- * Developed guidelines that ensure the provision of reserve land for places of worship of all communities in newly developed areas
- * Doubled the Anti-Corruption Agency operating budget to RM154 million and committed RM372 million for development under 9th Malaysia Plan
- * Made one-off payments to 542,000 pensioners of between RM200-RM400

Still in progress

bn achievement ad 070308BN's motto of "Security. Peace. Prosperity" for this election is

decidedly different from 2004 general election manifesto slogan "Excellence, glory, distinction".

Seven articles in the checklist fall into "In Progress" category.

They include generating at least two million quality job opportunities over the next five years, and to follow through on the five development corridors to bring equitable growth, investment and job opportunities across the nation.

The Small and Medium Enterprise industry receives attention as well when BN pledges to nurture and assist one million SMEs and entrepreneurs over the next five years.

To make the country more Internet savvy is the proposition to continue to improve broadband Internet penetration via the National Broadband Plan.

Articles 4 and 5 on the checklist stir much interest- to upgrade the police communications technology, armaments, vehicles, technical aids and training as well as focus police operations and resources in crime hot spots across the country.

The past term since the 2004 General Election has witnessed a drastic rise in crimes in the nation.

Escalating crimes involving children, brutal murders and thefts in recent years made the public vary and fearful.

The upgrades and focus on police operations may meet the demands of the people for tighter security on the ground.

No mention of rising cost of living

The 30,000 Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) protesters' rally on Nov 25 last year has also created a deep impact as one of the article of BN's pledges is to provide more scholarships at the undergraduate level for poor but deserving students regardless of race.

While Hindraf's protest rally was in support of a US\$4-trillion lawsuit against Malaysia's former colonial power for bringing Indians to Malaysian as indentured labourers and exploiting them for 150 years, the Indian community also brought issues of suffered discrimination and marginalization since Malaysia's independence.

The accomplishments in the checklist were stretched with many of the articles sub-divided into individual achievements.

While the 'in progress' articles addressed education, security, employment and improved police force, no mention was made on matters that is foremost on the rakyat's mind - the rising cost of living.

The 12th general election sees the contest for 214 parliamentary seats and 503 state seats. All polling centres will be opened from 8am to 5pm tomorrow.