

**Pakatan to unveil 'common manifesto' at national meet**  
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**By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal**

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 24 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) will reveal its common manifesto at its national convention next month, which the pact's leaders believe will highlight and help cement their preparation for the next general elections.

It is understood that PR's common manifesto will be "simple, concise" and "refined" to specific key points which best explain what the federal opposition has to offer to voters in the next general election.

The Malaysian Insider recently reported that PR will be holding what will likely be the coalition's last national convention before polls in Kedah on January 14 to iron out their election strategy.

"Right now, it (common manifesto) will tentatively be unveiled during the national convention. Details of it have yet to be finalised, but we are meeting regularly to try and finish everything," PKR strategic director Rafizi Ramli (picture) told The Malaysian Insider.

"The manifesto will contain the most important policies and goals of the three PR parties..it is refined and targeted. We cannot go into elections with so many messages, it has to be precise, point form, so that people can easily relate to what it is we are offering as a coalition and future government," he said.

PR's common manifesto will be a "marriage" of both its Common Policy Framework (CPF) and Buku Jingga policy, according to Rafizi.

The opposition's Buku Jingga manifesto had promised several reforms within the first of 100 days of taking over Putrajaya — including implementing a special RM500 monthly allowance for teachers that would cost RM3.2 billion annually. The manifesto had also contained measures to repeal the Internal Security Act (ISA), abolish the toll system by instructing Khazanah Berhad, Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) and other government bodies to take over highway assets from the concessionaires, as well as offer free wireless Internet access to those in urban and semi-urban areas.

But Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has since then introduced a slew of reforms on the part of his administration as well as Barisan Nasional, including abolishing the ISA, enacting a law regulating peaceful assembly as well as allowing students above the age of 21 to join political parties outside of campus.

"It is something like an election manifesto. We're going to be focused on what we want to bring to the table, like how Tony Blair's 1997 campaign was very focused on a few, solid issues," said the party strategist.

Former UK prime minister Blair successfully led his Labour party to a landslide victory in the country's 1997 general election, implementing several manifesto pledges including introduction of minimum wage, Human Rights Act and also the Freedom of Information Act.

PR leaders in charge of drafting out the manifesto are Rafizi, Nurul Izzah Anwar, Saifuddin Nasution, Chua Tian Chang, Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, Salahuddin Ayub, Dr Hatta Ramli, Tony Pua, Liew Chin Tong, Teresa Kok and Anthony Loke.

Rafizi pointed out the timely importance of the manifesto, saying that it showed that while PKR, PAS and DAP had differing ideologies, national, "bread and butter" issues brought them together as a pact.

"We do not win an election because of our core supporters...we need a manifesto which is aimed towards fence sitters. Issues that can resonate with them such as wages, high cost of living, this will attract the new generation of voters," added Rafizi.

While this was expected to become the likely focus of the convention, Rafizi said PR de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's January 9 sodomy trial verdict may have a bearing on the "mood" of the meet.

Anwar's two- year long sodomy trial comes to a close next month, where the court will finally deliver a decision on the charge against the Permatang Pauh MP.

He is accused of sodomising a former aide, a charge which he has vehemently denied, claiming it is part of an elaborate scheme by the ruling BN to end his political career.

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