

PM: Penang to be new growth hub

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PROMISE: Plan to be in Barisan's election manifesto as proof of commitment

NIBONG TEBAL: PENANG is set to become the country's new centre of development after the Klang Valley.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said Malaysia needed more development hubs apart from the Klang Valley, and the government had identified Penang as one of them.

He said to show Barisan Nasional's commitment to transform Penang as the next centre of growth, it would be included as one of the agendas in the coalition's manifesto for the 13th general election.

"I assure you this is not an empty promise. BN does not make empty promises," he said to thunderous applause from some 20,000, who attended the 1Malaysia Feast at Kampung Simpang Tiga, Sungai Acheh here.

Also present were former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who is also the member of parliament for Kepala Batas, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, newly-appointed state BN chairman Teng Chang Yeow, Penang Gerakan chairman Datuk Dr Teng Hock Nan and Penang Umno chief Datuk Zainal Abidin Osman.

Najib, who was in Penang for a day-long visit, also announced that the government had approved RM8.5 million for development projects in the Nibong Tebal parliamentary constituency.

He said the allocation was to provide additional facilities to local residents.

"So long as we can afford it, we will assist the people with better facilities as the people must be cared for in line with the 'People First' concept."

The allocation is for a multi-purpose hall here worth RM3 million, repainting apartments here (RM2 million), repairing houses in Indian and Chinese villages (RM2 million) and the reconstruction of Sekolah Agama Rakyat Al-Amin (RM1.5 million).

Najib also reminded the people about how the opposition had repeatedly failed to fulfil its pledges and changed tunes to win support.

"They are political chameleons, they keep changing their tune. Remember how they opposed the first Penang Bridge... now, they just cannot wait for the second one to be completed and have also announced plans for an undersea tunnel.

"We also have records to show how (DAP leaders) Lim Kit Siang and his son, Guan Eng, had supported the National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) when it was introduced by the BN government. Now, they are condemning it."

Najib said the list of opposition inconsistencies was just too many and the people were beginning to realise it.

"Someone said the other day that the only thing consistent about them is their inconsistencies."

Najib also slammed the opposition for continuously accusing others of corrupt practices when they themselves were guilty of it.

He cited the Sept 16, 2008 episode, where the opposition had attempted to grab power by trying to buy over 30 BN MPs to defect.

The prime minister also reminded the people about how the opposition no longer talked about the "Buku Jingga" (Pakatan Rakyat masterplan for the country) as it had lost all credibility.

On critics who questioned BN's readiness to embrace change, Najib said the ruling coalition, including Umno, had already undertaken many steps to improve itself.

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