

ETP a reincarnation of 'Mahathirist' policies, says Pakatan
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 8 — The Najib administration's ambitious Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) is nothing but a continuation of policies practised during the Mahathir administration, Pakatan Rakyat lawmakers said last night.

The opposition lawmakers charged that the ETP placed an over-reliance on its 113 Entry-Point Projects (EPP) while lacking concrete reform policies in addressing issues affecting employment, wages and public transportation.

Liew said the focus of the ETP was still on mega-projects while it did nothing to create sustainable, long-term policies. — File pic
They also said that the government's Performance Management and Implementation Unit (PEMANDU) had failed to model the ETP based on key strategic reform initiatives (SRIs) as highlighted by the New Economic Advisory Council (NEAC) in the New Economic Model (NEM) plan.

"The approach of the ETP is nothing more than the continuation of 30 years' policy of using public money to pump-prime the economy.

"The Najib administration continues to do what Barisan Nasional (BN) does best — approach everything from a project mentality, this is how BN governs," PKR strategic director Rafizi Ramli said last night during an ETP forum here.

DAP international secretary Liew Chin Tong, who was a panellist together with Rafizi at the forum, likened the ETP to a "reincarnated Mahathirist construct", saying that its focus was still on mega-projects while it did nothing to create sustainable, long-term policies.

He pointed out that despite reform pledges made under the ETP, the economy was still heavily dominated by the government and that it still favoured specific industries and a centralised form of strategic planning.

"They should localise authority, look for technologically capable industries and firms," Liew said.

He stressed that economic reform initiatives must include ways in which to provide better job opportunities, a comprehensive minimum wage policy, having more women in the workforce and improving a family's monthly income.

Rafizi likened the PEMANDU team to "turnaround managers" who were using the formula of turning around companies and applying it to improving the country's economy.

"This can work with smaller organisations, but not if you are talking about the country's economy.

"You cannot approach the economy from a project turnaround perspective, it has to be

based on policies," said the PKR leader.

The Najib administration launched the ETP in September 2010 with the stated target of doubling per capita income from RM23,700 in 2009 to RM48,000 in 2020.

Over the 10 years leading up to 2020, the ETP aims to pour RM1.4 trillion worth of investment into the economy to create 3.3 million new jobs via 113 EPPs.

PEMANDU says 92 per cent of this investment will come from the private sector (with GLCs investing 32 per cent) and eight per cent will come from the public sector.

But the Research for Social Advancement (REFSA) think-tank has claimed that PEMANDU's projections are faulty, and has been publishing a series of studies on PEMANDU since January.

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