

**BN Government Open To Giving RTM Air Time To Opposition Parties - Muhyiddin
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KUALA LUMPUR, June 7 (Bernama) -- The Barisan Nasional (BN) government is open to allowing political parties even from the opposition to present their election manifesto over the government-run Radio Television Malaysia (RTM), Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said.

He said the details, such as the air time and topic of the manifesto, would be handled by the Information Communication and Culture Ministry and the Election Commission (EC).

"We welcome the proposal raised by the Parliamentary Select Committee on Electoral Reform. It goes to show that the BN government is transparent, open and unafraid to allow opposition parties to use the government official media," he told reporters after meeting the people of Gombak at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Taman Melawati in Hulu Klang near here.

Muhyiddin was asked to comment on the demand by several opposition leaders for equal opportunity to be given in terms of broadcast time to explain their election manifesto over RTM.

Information Communication and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim had said that the Cabinet had approved a paper on the matter and the ministry would announce the rules and conditions once parliament is dissolved for the next general election.

Meanwhile, MIC President Datuk Seri G. Palanivel said the move was timely as it would allow both sides to air their views freely.

"This is also an opportunity for MIC to present our manifesto to the Indian community," he told Bernama.

PPP President Datuk M. Kayveas said the airing of the manifesto would enable political parties to reach out to their audience.

Political analyst Dr Sivamurugan Pandian is of the view that promoting the manifesto will allow viewers, especially the fence-sitters among the voters, to evaluate and decide which party they would want to vote for in an election.

"A manifesto reflects the policies and achievements of a party. Voters will get more information from this coverage and get to know the parties before deciding for whom they would want to cast their ballot.

"Empty promises can also be evaluated through the coverage if there are parties which tend to become more populist than face the reality," he said.

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