

BN denies political agenda in Merdeka theme
Malaysian Insider
June 27, 2012
By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, June 27 — Barisan Nasional (BN) MPs have insisted the 1 Malaysia “Janji Ditepati (Promises Fulfilled)” theme for this year’s national day celebrations is not political propaganda despite Datuk Seri Najib Razak having embarked on a similarly-titled nationwide campaign.

The federal opposition has accused the ruling coalition of threatening the public by using such a theme, which has also been the target of public ridicule and anger on the Internet.

But Umno supreme council member Datuk Tajuddin Abdul Rahman told The Malaysian Insider “there is no political agenda. The promise of independence is development and prosperity.”

“This is the aspiration of the people and it is the duty of the mandated government of the day to fulfil it,” the Pasir Salak MP added.

His colleague, Datuk Ismail Kassim, also said the theme for the August 31 and September 16 celebrations should not be viewed from a political perspective.

“If you politicise everything, then sure it looks like propaganda. But the reality is BN is the ruling party. Keeping your word is the duty of any government. Even if Pakatan Rakyat (PR) takes over, all policies must be fulfilled,” the Arau MP told The Malaysian Insider.

Anwar said Najib is no longer concerned that such action may be misconstrued. Information, Communication and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Rais Yatim announced on Sunday the theme for Malaysia Day and Merdeka celebrations, the latter of which will see Prime Minister Najib addressing the country during a night event at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil.

Pakatan Rakyat (PR) lawmakers told The Malaysian Insider yesterday the theme ran contrary to the ideas of freedom associated with independence, and condemned the BN chief for using a national holiday and state apparatus for “narrow political propaganda.”

“He doesn’t care anymore,” Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said, referring to the prime minister.

The Umno president has been campaigning across the country on a tour dubbed “Jelajah Janti Ditepati (Promises Fulfilled Tour)” over the past month in which he has accused the opposition of being an unreliable government that does not keep its pledges.

The strategy appears to be geared towards winning approval for the BN coalition, which lags far behind the prime minister’s own popularity.

The Pekan MP received a 65-per cent approval rating in a Merdeka Center poll last month but his government got the nod from only 48 per cent in the survey done after the Bersih rally on April 28.

PAS vice president Datuk Mahfuz Omar pointed out that with this announcement, “it is

certain elections won't be before September 16."

"This propaganda was started by the new Chief Secretary to the Government, who told civil servants not to believe the opposition's empty promises," he said, referring to Datuk Seri Ali Hamsa's statement on Sunday to the 1.4-million strong public service.

But an aide to Rais told The Malaysian Insider the decision on the theme was made through a government committee in charge of the celebrations and was in line with previous themes that centred on the Najib administration's 1 Malaysia slogan.

Most previous themes have centred on unity, such as 2008's "Perpaduan Teras Kejayaan (Unity is the Core of Success)".

But after Najib took over in 2009, independence day saw themes such as "Rakyat Didahulukan, Pencapaian Diutamakan (People First, Performance Now)" and "1 Malaysia Menjana Transformasi (1 Malaysia Driving Transformation)".

Immediately after Rais' announcement, Malaysians began mocking the decision, and "Janji Ditetapi" became a trending topic on micro-blogging site Twitter.

One user, @Hazrul_Basyen, posted yesterday afternoon: "I'm never expect that our #TemaMerdeka this year is "Janji Ditepati". Tak dak semangatlah nak sambut Merdeka tahun ni (No enthusiasm to celebrate Merdeka this year!!!)" [sic].

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/bn-denies-political-agenda-in-merdeka-theme/>