

**BN Government Addressing Micro Issues Faced By Indians -- Nor Mohamed
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By Prem Kumar Panjamothy**

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 3 (Bernama) -- The Barisan Nasional government under Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak is not only macro-oriented, but is now addressing micro-issues as well to help the Malaysian Indian community, said Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop.

The Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, who oversees the Economic Planning Unit (EPU), said it is the government's desire to ensure all communities in Malaysia grow and develop, on par with Malaysia's aim to emerge as a high-income nation, as mooted by Najib.

"The government, and the Prime Minister himself makes sure no community is sidelined in the national transformation agenda.

"We at the EPU have really gone micro. We have included all communities, including the Indians at the macro as well as micro-level programmes," Nor Mohamed told Bernama.

Since taking over the premiership of Malaysia in 2009, Najib had fulfilled his pledge to ensure quality education for the Indian community by allocating more than RM440 million to upgrade Tamil schools.

The government has also offered 1,000 new matriculation places to Indian students who excelled in the 2011 Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia examination.

On the business front, Najib had pledged to set aside a RM180 million in loan facilities for local Indian entrepreneurs during the Malaysian Indian Economic Conference on June 2.

MIC President Datuk Seri G. Palanivel announced the implementation of the loan facilities, on Thursday.

Nor Mohamed, who was known to be the backbone of former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad in helping Malaysia fight the 1997 Asian financial crisis, said all policies introduced by the current prime minister were inclusive and directly or indirectly involved every ethnic group.

"They (the policies) are made for all Malaysians and for sure, Indians will not be left out," he said.

He cited the EPU's allocation to assist pupils from Tamil schools who are facing hardship in moving on to Form One from Remove Classes, as an example.

He said the government is in the midst of pilot tests in Sepang, Klang and several other areas by providing tuition for the students from Remove Classes.

"Everyday except Monday, they attend tuition and they're allowed to stay overnight during weekends. We will provide facilities for that. This is to motivate the students and rescue them from the weak (educational) trap," he said.

Nor Mohamed said students from vernacular schools who fail to obtain a minimum grade 'C' for Bahasa Malaysia in their Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR), are placed in Remove Classes to improve their national language skills and brush up on their educational abilities.

But instead the pupils become weaker, he said, adding that this prompted the government to take affirmative action to prevent a high level of dropouts.

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