

Pakatan says will revamp media system under its rule

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KUALA LUMPUR, March 10 — The media will be just, more credible and better organised under Pakatan Rakyat's (PR) rule, the opposition pact has pledged as part of its commitment to widen civil liberties here should it win Election 2013.

In his speech while debating the pact's national manifesto at the Penang PR convention yesterday, PAS leader Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said this was the first promise he would see through after the polls.

"The media system must be transparent, must have credibility... not like what it is today, lacking in integrity, displaying a decline in journalistic ethics and showing a penchant for spreading slander," he was quoted as saying in PAS organ Harakah Daily today.

The Kuala Selangor MP added that should PR opt to maintain the current media system, which is largely controlled by the ruling Barisan Nasional-led (BN) government, the public would likely punish the pact for failing to live up to its pledges.

He said it has become a primary duty of PR parties PAS, PKR and DAP to ensure media freedom, largely since the parties have had to endure over 50 years of allegedly being bashed in the media with "lies".

The PAS central working committee member said these "lies" must stop as many among the Malays are easily swayed by them, even to the extent of being convinced of their obligation to vote for BN.

"Umno and BN aren't actually strong parties. They are weak, but because they control the mainstream media, whatever they say gets repeated on the ground to ensure that the people continue voting for BN," he added, according to Harakah Daily.

PR, a loose pact of opposition parties PKR, DAP and PAS, expects to topple BN from its over half a century rule of Malaysia in Election 2013, which must be held by June.

The pact is believed to have grown significantly in strength and in numbers since it was hurriedly formed after the last general election in 2008, when BN suffered unprecedented electoral losses.

In its polls manifesto launch last month, PR doled out a string of pledges to lure more voters into its fold, including a complete revamp of the country's economic approach with the aim to ensure every Malaysian household draws a minimum monthly income of RM4,000 by the end of its first term.

The pact also pledged to drop fuel prices and electricity tariffs, scrap toll payments, reduce car prices, free education, as well as increase the ceiling for taxable income to those who earn a minimum of RM400,000 annually, instead of the current RM250,000.

PKR strategy director Rafizi Ramli, when announcing details in the pact's "people-friendly" manifesto, said PR's focus was on raising incomes by creating better and more job

opportunities with higher salaries.

"We want to repair and reduce income disparities here, unlike under Umno-Barisan Nasional's (BN), where the poor only becomes poorer and the rich, richer.

"Because their economic approach is race-based, with their 30 per cent Bumiputera equity target, while ours is on improving incomes regardless of race," he said.

Rafizi also outlined four main methods in PR's plan to improve Malaysia's economy, including a target of creating an additional one million jobs by reducing dependence on foreign labour in stages, creating a smart economy based on principles of justice, reviewing public concessions and ending government monopolies, and reforming the education system.

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