

**BN Committed To Helping Indians Achieve Three Per Cent Equity Ownership - PM
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PUTRAJAYA, April 8 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said tonight a Barisan Nasional (BN) government helmed by him was committed to helping the Indian community achieve the targeted three per cent equity ownership in the country.

The prime minister said the government would assist the MIC, the party which represented the Indians, to expand the community's equity participation through a number of initiatives.

"A few of their (MIC) efforts may not have attained the anticipated success. I believe government intervention is most necessary, otherwise the equity target may be difficult to reach," he said in a special interview on the Tamil edition of BernamaTV's 'Helo Malaysia' programme on Astro Channel 502.

In the hour-long interview conducted by journalists Michael Savarimuthu and K. Ghandi, Najib spoke about various programmes to improve the community's quality of life and hoped that Indians would give him another mandate in the 13th General Election.

Najib said he realised that the Indians lagged behind and that he was committed to transforming their lives and elevating their economic status through various initiatives to effect a transition from life in the plantations and estates to urban living.

"The Indians have made a huge contribution in the context of national development and we should never forget that. Their role in the plantation is well known and, due to their efforts, Malaysia became the leading global producer of rubber and reaped high export returns.

"They also operated our railways, the Public Works Department (JKR) and so on," he said.

Najib said he felt obliged to do something because his main principle as the leader of the government was to be fair to all.

He added that the government had introduced several initiatives and business loans assistance not only for the Indian community but for all communities.

"Indians have participated in the Small Retailer Transformation (TUKAR) and 1Azam poverty eradication programmes and benefited from loans from Tekun Nasional and Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia," he said.

Asked if the government could increase the allocation for Indians under Tekun Nasional and Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia, Najib said it was possible dependent on the country's economic situation.

"Of course (it can be increased) but on condition that our economy expands," he said.

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