

**Academic Excellence In BN Manifesto Is Wise Investment
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 9 (Bernama) -- The academic excellence emphasised in the Barisan Nasional (BN) manifesto has been described as a wise investment to produce a quality future generation.

Universiti Malaya faculty of arts and social sciences' history department senior lecturer Dr Ahmad Kamal Ariffin Mohd Rus said, a special allocation for all types of schools would help upgrade the facilities and comfort of students.

"It also meets the 1Malaysia Concept as funds are given equally, and additional schools will be set up where needed, giving rural children more opportunities to enrol," he told Bernama here Tuesday.

Meanwhile, United Chinese School Teachers Association (Jiao Zong) chairman Ong Chiow Chuen said teacher shortage could be resolved through fast-track promotion for 420,000 teachers, as stated in the BN manifesto.

"Chinese national-type schools (SJKC) face a serious shortage and there are still many support teachers who cannot further their studies at teacher training institutes (IPG) at one point. By reshuffling the institutes and raising the requirement of teacher trainee intakes, we can produce more quality teachers and overcome the shortage of teachers, especially in Chinese national-type schools," he said.

However, Ong hoped BN could provide a detailed explanation on its proposal for a simplified learning and teaching system for BM in Chinese and Tamil schools.

Touching on the UEC examination, he said, although it was not stated in the manifesto, he believed the BN could carry it out.

Meanwhile, Parent Action Group for Education chairman Datin Noor Azimah Abdul Rahim hoped the government could maintain Teaching and Learning of Science and Mathematics in English in schools, although BN had emphasised on the aspect of improving the command of English and making it a must-pass subject in the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia examination.

She said BN's efforts to increase English teachers was needed to help weak students master the language.

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