

**Only 14pc of BN's manifesto is original, says PKR
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By Boo Su-Lyn**

PETALING JAYA, April 9 — Only 14 per cent of Barisan Nasional's (BN) election manifesto is original, while 15 per cent was stolen from Pakatan Rakyat (PR), PKR said today.

PKR strategy director Rafizi Ramli said that out of 157 pledges listed in BN's manifesto for Election 2013, 14 per cent (22 promises) was new, 15 per cent (23 promises) was copied from PR's election manifesto, and 71 per cent was about BN's current programmes.

"Recycling current programmes in a complicated administration means that the effectiveness of such programmes in resolving people's problems has decreased," Rafizi (picture) told a press conference at the PKR headquarters here.

"Copying us, especially in major things like making cars cheaper, getting rid of toll, giving individual taxi permits, detailing the role of the government in creating homes for the people instead of leaving it to the private sector, building homes for estate workers, and giving fair aid to schools, shows that Barisan Nasional has finally accepted the fact that Manifesto Rakyat is good, workable, and that it fulfils the people's wishes," he added.

BN pledged to gradually reduce the prices of cars by 20 to 30 per cent, while PR has promised to cut excise duties on private vehicles by 20 per cent annually until the tax is abolished by 2018.

Rafizi also stressed that the government needed to subsidise houses instead of working with private companies to build affordable homes.

"We want to establish the National Housing Board that will be given RM5 billion each year," said Rafizi.

"If the cost of flats in Kota Damansara is RM250,000, we can sell at RM180,000 because the government will fork out RM70,000 subsidy," he added.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak promised last Saturday to build a million affordable houses in the next five years, addressing voters' concerns of the rising cost of living and skyrocketing property prices.

Najib also said that BN would strive to attract investments of RM1.3 trillion that would in turn create 3.3 million jobs, with two million of them in the high-income sector.

Rafizi, however, denounced the pledge as "unrealistic", pointing out that only 300,000 jobs have been created annually for the past three years.

He said that Najib would need to create an additional 650,000 jobs on average each year to achieve the pledge outlined in BN's election manifesto.

"There's also no promise to reduce reliance on foreign workers," said Rafizi.

He said statistics revealed by the Economic Planning Unit under the Prime Minister's Department showed an increase of 300,000 jobs annually from 2010 to 2012.

He stressed that a PR government would reduce a million foreign workers in five years by implementing a monthly minimum wage of RM1,100 to attract local workers, as well as by upgrading the skills of school-leavers.

"One of the biggest reasons why there are no takers for low-skilled jobs that led to the reliance of foreign workers is salary," said Rafizi.

"Every year, there are three million school-leavers with only SPM. They're not being utilised. We'll retrain them and implement nationwide training on up-skilling that will slowly phase out foreign workers," he added.

Malaysia has a 13-million strong workforce and four million are migrant workers, according to the Finance Ministry quoted in The Star Online last January.

Rafizi stressed that freezing the hiring of foreign workers would disrupt the economy, noting that it was more effective to address local workers' salary and job mismatch concerns.

"We'll have a facilitation fund to implement the minimum wage," he said, adding that the government fund would help companies absorb cost increases resulting from the minimum wage policy.

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