

Najib pitches affordable homes as BN bids to win over Penang
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GEORGE TOWN, April 30 – Datuk Seri Najib Razak gave a final push tonight in Barisan Nasional's bid to wrest Penang when he announced a plan to build 9,999 new affordable homes in Air Putih, Air Itam and Paya Terubong here.

"The federal government, through 1Malaysia Development Berhad, has signed agreements to buy land to build 2,222 low-medium cost homes and 1,111 affordable homes in each of the areas," he said in his speech at a 1Malaysia Night with the Prime Minister event at Rifle Range.

Affordable housing is one of the main issues that both Barisan Nasional and Pakatan Rakyat is championing to win votes from Penangites due to the skyrocketing prices of homes in this island state.

In addition to the 9,999 units of housing, those living in 962 one-bedroom homes in Kampung Melayu will be given three-bedroom homes in the Air Itam affordable housing development.

The Federal Reserve Unit (FRU) land in Rifle Range will also be joined with the current low-cost flats next to it and will be redeveloped where 4,800 new low-medium cost homes will be built.

Najib said existing occupants from the flats will be given bigger and better living conditions as the unit size will be double that of current size.

The launch of this 9,999 units is in addition to the earlier promise by Najib to build 20,000 units of affordable housing in the state.

"The lack of affordable housing in Penang is a major issue, this is why I am delivering my promise of affordable housing to Penangites," he said.

In this project, 1MDB will be the master developer for the redevelopment projects spread out in the three different areas under the Bukit Bendera and Bukit Gelugor constituencies.

Najib, in officially launching the project, said the registration for the project is now open and called on voters to give their support to BN Penang chief Teng Chang Yeow.

He had also promised to scrap the controversial undersea tunnel by the PR state government if BN were given the mandate to rule Penang in this May 5 polls.

Najib said the free port status will breathe new economic life to Penang and agreed to grant the free port status to Penang if BN was given a new mandate.

Earlier, Najib had also announced the approval for Han Chiang College to be upgraded to university college status for its mass communications programmes once it completes all the necessary requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education.

"The federal government has approved the setting up of a new branch of Heng Ee High School," he said.

Both Han Chiang College and Heng Ee High School were each given allocations of RM1 million from the Yayasan Rakyat 1Malaysia.

The PR had also promised to build a total 22,000 units of affordable housing in its Penang manifesto.

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