

Najib: BN govt will address all lapses

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GOVT FOR ALL: 'Our priority to improve the lot of all races'

KUALA LUMPUR: THE Barisan Nasional government will make right all previous shortcomings in addressing the plight of marginalised Malaysians, including the poor among the Indian community.

Prime Minister and BN chairman Datuk Seri Najib Razak said it was the ruling coalition's priority to improve the lot of all communities in the all-inclusive spirit of 1Malaysia.

"This is what Barisan Nasional stands for, a government for all Malaysians. One that is fair for all Malaysians and one that is courageous enough to not only make changes, but to accept its own weaknesses and faults.

"I have apologised for the shortcomings of the BN government, or as Mr Waytha Moorthy (Hindu Rights Action Force chairman P. Waytha Moorthy) puts it, 'lapses' in our delivery to the Indian community.

"But as the saying goes, 'better late than never'. What is important for us is not only change, but real change and real progress. And that real change and real progress can come from within," he said prior to witnessing the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the non-governmental group Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) and BN at SJK (T) Vivekananda in Brickfields.

BN secretary-general Datuk Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor signed the document on behalf of BN while Waytha Moorthy represented his organisation.

Described as a smart partnership between BN and Hindraf, the MoU aims to bring poor Indians into the mainstream of the country's development.

Earlier, in his speech, Najib urged the crowd of Hindraf members at the event not to be seduced by the opposition's oft-used rallying call for ubah (change) and mass revolts that could put a stop to the country's peace and prosperity.

"Those countries (which went through the so-called Arab Spring) are now experiencing a severe Arab winter.

"So, do not be fooled by the empty promises of some. Don't get seduced by the word ubah, because if you ubah, it can also be for the worse."

On other issues which affected the Indians, Najib said the community should not forget about how BN settled various problems that affected them, such as the Kampung Buah Pala issue in Penang, which was settled by BN and not the DAP-led state government.

The BN government has also been resolving the issue of stateless Indians, with 7,000 cases settled so far.

Najib said the stateless citizen problem was a "work in progress" and more focus should be on how to locate them.

"What is important is not how many there are, but where they are. If there are those (among them) who deserve to be given citizenship and birth certificates, then we should do it."

Najib said a special unit would be set up under the Prime Minister's Department to address the plight of Indians, according to four core areas underlined in the BN-Hindraf MoU.

Meanwhile, Waytha Moorthy called on Hindraf members and supporters to ensure BN received a two-third victory in the upcoming elections.

He described the MoU as historic not only for Indians but for all Malaysians, as it marked more good things that will directly benefit about 1.5 million Malaysian Indians.

"Let us all work for BN to ensure a two-thirds victory," he told the packed hall, who greeted his arrival with shouts of "Hindraf valga" or "Long live Hindraf".

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