

Najib says 10-year Indian blueprint is no 'empty talk'

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The plan involves getting more Indians into universities, providing more places in the civil service and solving citizenship woes plaguing the community.

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Najib Razak today hailed the federal government's first-ever blueprint to uplift Indians in Malaysia, with an allocation of more than RM1 billion, as a serious document and not just "empty talk".

He said the 10-year Malaysian Action Plan for the Indian community reflected the Barisan Nasional (BN) government's sincere intention to improve the lot of the Indians and had no relation to the impending 14th general election due next year.

Describing the document as "historic", he said it had no relevance at all to the upcoming election because he had already promised the initiative during the launch of the 11th Malaysia Plan in 2015.

"However, I would not block any Indian who wants to support BN," he said to applause.

"Today, we are not just play-acting but presenting a serious effort," he said while officiating at the launch of the blueprint at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

"Those who are cynical will say that this is just a plan and the implementation is a different story.

"Well, I want to inform you that this plan provides a clear mechanism and the executive committee will monitor the programmes to ensure they are run effectively.

"What we are presenting is not just empty talk, political rhetoric or 'vetti pecchu' ('empty chatter' in Tamil), but 'nijjam' (fact)."

Najib said the initiative's progress would be monitored by the cabinet committee for the Indian community (CCIC), chaired by him.

Its implementation would be watched over by an executive committee chaired by MIC president Dr S Subramaniam.

On Sept 13, 2015, Najib had announced that an action plan for the community would be drafted for implementation from 2016 to 2020.

The launch of the Indian blueprint comes soon after he had unveiled the Bumiputera Economic Transformation Roadmap 2.0 on April 19.

The 10-year Indian blueprint plan includes:

- RM500 million for a shares scheme under Permodalan Nasional Berhad for the B40 group (those whose household income represents the lowest 40%);
- special assistance to increase admission of Indians into higher education institutions like universities, colleges and polytechnics by at least 7%;
- cooperation with the Indus Education Foundation, with a sum of RM40 million for four years, to tackle problems related to progress in higher education;
- raising the participation of Indians in the public service by at least 7% at all grade levels by 2016;
- a special approval system under the home ministry to help Indians born before 1957 to gain citizenship; and,
- a Special Implementation Task Force to be the “touch-point” between the government and the community via 10 service centres located in areas with high Indian populations.

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