

GE14: Sarawak BN to focus on bread and butter issues

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Deputy Chief Minister Douglas Uggah says he is not taking the people's support for granted and is going to the ground frequently.

KUCHING: 1MDB may be a hot topic now with the latest United States Department of Justice lawsuit exposing how high-level people spent money allegedly stolen from the investment fund, but Sarawak BN believes bread and butter issues will continue to win over voters come the general election.

Speaking to FMT in an exclusive interview on Saturday, Sarawak Deputy Chief Minister Douglas Uggah Embas noted that the opposition's strategy of playing up national issues failed to bring them glory during last year's state election.

The BN swept 72 out of the 82 seats in the state polls in the landslide victory, chiefly by addressing the issues that concerned the state and its people, he said.

"Before Tok Nan passed away, I was with him and he was asking me how to fight the next parliamentary election.

"I said: 'Sir, we have to continue to sing the same song we sang in the state election,'" he said, referring to the late Sarawak chief minister Adenan Satem.

"We have a really clear agenda to focus on the everyday lives of our people here, the farmers and the fishermen who are a very important segment.

"This agenda and Sarawak BN's plan to continue finding ways that can resolve most of the state's issues, which we don't expect to happen overnight, has to be conveyed to the people in Sarawak.

"Of course, that will come together with our rural transformation programme. You see, in Sarawak's rural areas, the bread and butter issues are still very, very important."

"And who better to resolve issues such as the lack of electricity or paved roads in the rural areas than BN?" said Uggah, who is also state agriculture modernisation, native land and regional development minister.

However, he said the BN would not take the support of the Sarawak people for granted.

He said the people of Sarawak were not fools who would fall for rhetoric. They would want to see and feel the changes that the state government had promised.

This was why he and other state leaders opted for a hands-on approach in interacting with the people by going to the ground frequently, he said.

“No project is too petty. We will engage with our people, monitor the implementation, and check that all projects promised are executed.

“That approach has made the people feel like we are the only ones that can bring them development. We are their hope.

“So I’m very confident of the 14th general election. The natives, including the Dayaks, will throw their lot behind us.”

He assured that Adenan’s promise of a better future for Sarawak and its people would be continued by the current administration.

“When the new Sarawak Chief Minister Abang Johari Openg took over (from Adenan), he said in no uncertain terms that he will continue what Adenan started.

“He has shown that he has followed through with this and some results have been seen.

“In addition to that, he has his own programmes which will allow the people to continue having hopes that we will bring them a better future.”

Adenan, who passed away from heart complications in January this year, had won the hearts of Sarawakians with policies to accelerate development in the vast, infrastructure-poor state.

During his short tenure as the chief minister, Adenan abolished all tolls in the state and fought hard for the devolution of powers from the federal government to the state.

He also earned the respect of Malaysians, in and outside the state, when he took an uncompromising stand against bigotry by slamming religious extremism and the use of the term “immigrants” to describe the ethnic Chinese.

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