

Youth-friendly policies will boost PH support, say youth leaders

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UEC recognition, free education and more institutes of higher learning among issues the youth wings from the four-party opposition coalition will focus on.

PETALING JAYA: Pakatan Harapan (PH) says the party will continue wooing young voters with policies that are relevant to the demographic in the next general election (GE14).

PH Youth said the trend among young voters nowadays is mainly in support of policies that have an impact on them.

“We have a few principal policies that could attract the voters, especially on issues such as education, housing and employment,” PKR Youth chief Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad said at the PH Youth education manifesto announcement here, today.

In its manifesto, PH Youth included the need for greater access to education, especially for children at the primary school level, and free access to higher education at public universities.

“PH proposes to build more higher learning institutes including universities, teaching colleges and vocational colleges to reduce the demand at private higher learning institutions.

“This will reduce private institutions that do not pass the grade and ensure only the best ones survive,” he said.

Nik Nazmi also said as part of the PH Youth education manifesto, the party will focus on the issue of getting the Unified Examination Certificate (UEC) recognised.

“For a start, the Selangor, Penang and Sarawak state governments have already recognised UEC through their state universities and we believe this policy should be applied at the national level too,” he said.

UEC is a standardised test for Chinese independent high school students in Malaysia, which has been in place since 1975. It is recognised globally, even by Oxford University, but not in Malaysia itself.

Meanwhile, PPBM Youth chief Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman said the party would use unconventional methods to gain young voters' votes.

"Just over half of PPBM members are under the age of 35. We use social media aggressively to engage with young voters.

"One unconventional way we make contact is by having our own 'Menteri Mat Motor', Zainal Abidin Sihab, who is very influential among the Mat Rempit community. He visits the youth who are from Mat Rempit communities to hear their problems and needs," Syed Saddiq said.

He added that the rural areas are no longer a major stronghold for Umno as the youth in such areas are beginning to open their eyes and realise what they really need.

Syed Saddiq also said when campaigning in rural areas, for example, PPBM Youth was able to draw the crowds despite raising small amounts to organise events to get in touch with the grassroots.

"We only rely on handouts from willing party members, and at our recent campaign in Kedah, we only used RM3,000 but still managed to pull in more than 10,000 people.

"That is way cheaper and more cost-effective than Prime Minister Najib Razak's recent event held in the same state that cost millions of ringgit, yet only saw 5,000 people attend it," Syed Saddiq said.

In a recent statement, PH Youth also promised Sabah and Sarawak a new deal if it captures Putrajaya in GE14.

The crux of the new deal is returning to Sabah and Sarawak their equal partner status with Peninsular Malaysia in the Federation of Malaysia, as it originally was when Malaysia was formed in 1963, as well as decentralising powers and tax revenue.

A PH federal government, they said, would return 50% of all taxes collected to Sabah and Sarawak, as this would help "uplift the economy and living standards of both regions, especially in the rural areas, in the shortest available time".

After more than 50 years under Barisan Nasional rule, PH Youth felt that "Malaysia had failed Sabah and Sarawak".

In the coming months, PH Youth plans to go around advocating this new deal for Malaysians known as #HarapanAnakMuda.

“The younger generation is the most critical group for us to focus on in GE14. They are not easily influenced and will only support if you can solve their woes,” Nik Nazmi said.

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