

BN Manifesto: mandate for a greater Malaysia

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KUALA LUMPUR, April 7 (Bernama) --The Barisan Nasional led by Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak tonight pledged to implement programmes to make Malaysia greater with a brighter future by giving preference to the people and providing more equitable and comprehensive development from Perlis to Sabah and Sarawak.

This promise was contained in the 220-page BN manifesto for the 14th General Election, which had 364 initiatives under the theme 'With BN for A Greater Malaysia', that was launched here tonight by the Prime Minister and BN chairman who pledged to implement a comprehensive development especially in areas deemed to have been neglected over the decades.

"Trust me, your vote for the Barisan Nasional is the mandate for the continuity of prosperity, well-being and peace in this small country. May God bless us all," Najib said in the preface of the manifesto that he launched at the Axiata Arena in Bukit Jalil.

The manifesto makes its pledges under 14 inclusive, comprehensive and practical thrusts, namely Mothers and Women First; A Home for Everyone; Three Million Jobs; More Smiles in Sabah and Sarawak; Futuristic Transportation; Digital Empowerment; Made in Malaysia; A Newer BR1M; Rakyat's Economy; Future-Oriented Education; Live Healthy; Peaceful 1Ngaraku; TN50 and Universal Child Care.

A highlight of the Mothers and Women First thrust is the setting up of a Women's Economic Council, chaired by the Prime Minister, tasked with ensuring that the direction and development of the women's economic agenda are given proper attention. Another is enacting the Sexual Harassment Act to protect victims from sexual harassment.

Under the 'A Home for Everyone' thrust, the BN pledges to, among other things, provide a Public Housing Assistance Scheme to assist renters who may be categorised as poor or persons with disabilities (PWDs), and build more affordable and low-cost housing projects on idle Malay reserve, 'wakaf' and 'baitulmal' land.

A pledge under the 'More Smiles in Sabah and Sarawak' thrust is to realise by consensus the rights of Sabah and Sarawak under the Malaysia Agreement 1963 while another is to improve the quality of telecommunications coverage across Sabah and Sarawak with an allocation of RM2 billion.

The 'Futuristic Transportation' thrust pledges, as one of the initiatives, to introduce the TN50 Public Transport Pass (costing between RM50 - RM150) that gives unlimited monthly access to public transport for students, working youths, senior citizens and the disabled.

A one-off assistance of RM1,500 for the children of BR1M recipients who enrol in higher education institutes is a pledge under the 'A Newer BR1M' thrust.

The 'Rakyat's Economy' thrust pledges, among other things, to raise the minimum wage in phases to at least RM1,500 within five years, reduce the maximum limit on interest rates and late payment charges for credit cards, provide a special incentive of RM5,000 to every Felda settler and create a special grant for replantation worth up to RM7,500 per hectare

for each qualified Felda settler in the next five years starting 2018. This grant is to reduce up to 70 per cent replantation debt of Felda settlers.

The 'Live Healthy' thrust pledges to increase the current individual income tax exemption rate for parents' medical expenses from RM5,000 to RM10,000, streamline health and dental services to the elderly and bed-ridden patients through home visits and introduce water laws through the application of the National Integrated Centralised Management System to guarantee access to clean water for the people.

Besides these thrusts, the manifesto also promises to establish a National Syariah Judicial Council; a committee to empower the Syariah Court; and a special non-Muslim unit in the Prime Minister's Department to promote dialogue on equality and mutual understanding between races; as well as continue to support the independence of the Palestinian state and recognise Jerusalem as its official capital.

The manifesto also offers various other initiatives which, according to Najib, were not in isolation but should be read with the 11th Malaysia Plan, the 2050 National Transformation and annual budgets.

In the preface to the manifesto, Najib says that in the last five years, the BN has, to the best of its ability, remained true to the 2013 Pledge and had accomplished close to 99.4 per cent of the promises of the past elections against the backdrop of the global economic crisis, falling oil prices and devaluation of the ringgit.

The coming mandate is for our future. Barisan Nasional is not a perfect government free of any faults. Nevertheless, we have brought about many improvements and changes that are

in accordance with the people's wishes. Upon this understanding, I appeal to my fellow Malaysians to evaluate the performance of the Barisan Nasional government fairly and thoroughly, he says.

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