

English-medium schools, UEC

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KOTA KINABALU: Sabah's right to have control over electricity and gas will be returned if the Barisan Nasional continues to get the mandate from the people to form the next government.

English medium schools will also be introduced in Sabah and Sarawak under a pilot project to improve language proficiency, as requested by both states.

Qualified Malaysians with overseas examination certificates that are equivalent to Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia and Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia such as the Unified Examination Certificate Senior Middle (UEC) examination will be considered for enrolment in higher educational institutions if they obtain a credit in Bahasa Malaysia and pass in History.

Other measures to improve English language proficiency are the Dual Language Programme (DLP) and High Immersion Programme (HIP).

Caretaker Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak announced this Saturday night when unveiling the BN Manifesto for the 14th General Election which, specifically for Sabah and Sarawak, he said would "add more smiles to the people."

"I'm pleased to announce that the right for supervision and control over electricity and gas we return to Sabah," he said when announcing the manifesto live on TV.

He also reiterated his pledge that all Sabah's rights under the Malaysia Agreement 1963 which were taken during the time of a "certain leader" whether deliber-

ately or not will also be returned.

He said one example is the 90:10 ratio of teachers in Sabah and Sarawak that targets 90 per cent them must be locals from the Borneo states and the remaining 10 per cent from Peninsula Malaysia.

"We have already achieved 87 per cent," he declared.

He said the Pan Borneo Highway project will continue with a total allocation of RM40 billion and more allocations will be given for perimeter surveys of Native Customary Rights (NCR) lands.

He acknowledged that both the Borneo states remain BN's fixed deposit and, therefore, must be cared for.

"We must take care of Sabah and Sarawak. We never condemn the people of Sabah and Sarawak. We never insult them," he said.

Also present during the event were Sabah Chief Minister Tan Sri Musa Aman and Sabah BN component party presidents.

The full list of pledges is as follows:

■ Rights of Sabah and Sarawak under the Malaysia Agreement 1963 will be realised through consensus.

■ Improve the quality of telecommunication coverage throughout Sabah and Sarawak - RM2 billion.

■ Expand electricity supply in Sabah and Sarawak with a RM2.3 billion allocation.

■ Abolish price label of goods in Peninsula Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak toward a One Nation One Price.

■ Upgrade long houses in Sarawak and water villages in Sabah.

■ Strengthen transport network in Sabah and Sarawak by upgrading 12,500km of rural roads.

■ Continue water supply subsidy in rural areas of

Sabah.

■ Provide special allocations for entrepreneurs in Sabah and Sarawak.

■ Impose more facts and historical perspectives from Sabah and Sarawak.

■ Establish a Native Research and Indigenous Peoples Institute in Universiti Malaysia Sarawak and University Malaysia Sabah.

■ Enhance the armed strength of security forces in the ESSZONE.

■ Enhance land border security control in Sabah and Sarawak - (AKSEM) and AKSEMNET

■ Upgrade Sandakan Airport.

■ Build Mukah and Lawas Airports

Five million schoolgoing children will also be equipped with digital skills for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR 4.0) within five years.

Other than that, the government wants to implement appropriate classroom sizes and reduce teachers' administrative workload as well as provide better teaching aids.

The manifesto stresses that human capital development and education in the country must be crafted to suit the demands of the times.

As such, Malaysia needs a holistic plan to develop the potential of young children, to students in primary and secondary schools to enhance technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and develop a dynamic university ecosystem that is in line with the needs of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR 4.0).

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According to the manifesto, a clear commitment to strengthen human capital and education will determine the future of Malaysia.

Government initiatives and actions, it noted, are the best benchmark to evaluate efforts at preparing the people with the creativity, thinking capability and skills to face an increasingly competitive landscape.

Other initiatives are introducing special student discount cards to reduce the cost of transportation, government services and education-related necessities. BN wants to provide incentives to capable graduates and retired language teachers to administer online teaching and learning services.

Other initiatives for education under the BN Manifesto are:

- Providing a one-off assistance of RM1,500 for the children of Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia (BR1M) recipients that enrol in higher educational institutions.

- Upgrading all dilapidated schools in rural areas within five years.

- Matching university students and future employers at an earlier stage through a Job Matching Committee under the SLiM 2.0 programme.

- Creating highly skilled construction workers by implementing training schemes and offering commensurate wages.

- Encouraging employers to provide childcare facilities by offering special initiatives such as tax exemptions.

- Upgrading the Integrated Special Education Programme (PPKI) in all schools involved to unlock the potential of differently-abled children.

- Increasing the limit of the Special Incentive Matching Grant for the 1Malaysia Education Savings Scheme to RM1,000.

- Providing skills and work training opportunities for underprivileged youth.

- Extending the income tax exemption period for parents of National Education Savings Scheme (SSPN) account holders.

- Increasing the number of subjects in the Dual Language Programme (DLP) to make it more comprehensive.

- Expand the implementation of 'Anak Angkat' programmes for socio-cultural development of students, teachers and public sector employees.

- Incorporating more historical facts and perspectives from Sabah and Sarawak to enhance the History subject syllabus.

- Building and increasing the capacity of

boarding facilities for rural students across the country.

- Expanding high speed Internet access (100 Gbps) to all public universities.

- Allocating RM12 million for special education programmes to rural communities benefiting 615,000 participants.

- Providing a RM3 million allocation to conduct parenting workshops in 168 identified locations.

- Establishing an Institute of Native and Indigenous Peoples Studies at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak and Universiti Malaysia Sabah.

- Transforming the infrastructure at public universities to achieve smart campus status with the introduction of cashless transactions.

- Reducing dropout rates among Orang Asli students and increasing the number of literacy programmes in rural areas.

- Strengthening the multi-stream education system by approving the construction of new facilities according to needs, alongside special allocations for development and maintenance for all Government assisted schools (SBK), including national-type Chinese Schools (SJKC) and national-type Tamil Schools (SJKT).