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Pakatan's 100-day plan unrealistic, say experts

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PETALING JAYA: Pakatan Rakyat's 100-day plan is fraught with uncertainties and is ultimately not feasible, says Mercury Securities Sdn Bhd research head Edmund Tham.

He cites the move to abolish toll as an example.

"There are many toll concessionaires. To abolish tolls completely would be a really huge financial undertaking, probably requiring the issuance of government guaranteed bonds.

"This is unlikely because the upcoming Klang Valley MRT project has already put a strain on finances."

Tham anticipates some problems over the subsidy revamps that Pakatan favours.

"If private sector subsidies are shifted to cover subsidies for the public, there will be stiff opposition from business operators.

"Their associations are sure to lobby the government to protect their business interests and profitability."

He feels a RM500 salary increment for teachers would not be absurd if it applied only to lower-scale teachers, where it mattered most.

"Teachers on a higher salary grade would not benefit as much. Financially, it is more realistic that the increment be given to those in the lower grades."

As for the frog-water supply plan, Tham says only low-income families are in need of the subsidy.

He sees no reason why well-to-do households should further burden the national coffers.

Tham says it is hard to give a detailed assessment of the plan because details on the quantum of funds needed and sources of financing were not publicly disclosed.

"It would be helpful if Pakatan could publish a booklet on the plan or make the full details available online."

Universiti Sains Malaysia School of Social Sciences senior lecturer Dr Azeem Fazwan Ahmad Farouk says opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar



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Ibrahim "is talking as a politician, not as an economist" in arguing for the 100-day plan.

He says the country is not even a high-income country to be able to cut down on subsidies.

The loose coalition announced last month that if the plan took off, Khazanah Nasional Bhd and the Employees Provident Fund would be asked to facilitate the takeover of highway assets by the government to enable the abolition of tolls.

It also aims to get rid of Felda Plantations.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said on Monday that Malaysia would go bankrupt, like Greece, within two years if Pakatan's plan was implemented.

He called the populist plan "unrealistic" and "irresponsible", saying

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it risked the nation's future.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia political analyst Datuk Dr Shamsul Amri Baharuddin says the 100-day plan is a desperate trick to grab public attention.

Yesterday, Anwar claimed at a press conference that Pakatan only needed RM19 billion to implement the plan.

"I suggest a debate so that the public can decide for itself, based on facts and figures," he said at the party headquarters.

Universiti Utara Malaysia International Studies programme chairman Dr Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Sani says the plan diverts public attention from Pakatan's problems.

"He (Anwar) finds it a good way to divert attention from Pakatan's leadership crisis and the alleged unity

talks between Pas and Barisan Nasional leaders."

MCA Central Committee member Datuk Ti Lian Ker and MIC information chief P. Kamalanathan both point to Pakatan's weakness in delivering election campaign promises and Anwar's failed Sept 16 government take-over plan.

"Probably, Anwar needs to first consider putting his Sept 16 promise to a debate," says Kamalanathan, adding that BN priorities are to serve the people.

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal says promises made to the people must be realistic.

He feels Pakatan's 100-day plan will be too costly to implement and the party must realise its true financial capacity before putting the country at risk.

