

**PAS supports reforming NEP**  
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Islamic party PAS on today backed an opposition plan to reform positive discrimination policies for Malays, saying they were unfair to minorities. MCPX

The opposition party is part of a three-member opposition alliance which made huge strides in weekend elections, seizing control of four more states and a third of parliamentary seats.

Opposition figurehead Anwar Ibrahim has said that the discrimination policies which give majority Malays benefits in education, housing and business would be sidelined in the five states the opposition now controls.

He said the New Economic Policy (NEP) championed by the ruling Umno would be replaced with a system to boost poor Malaysians whether they be Malay, ethnic Chinese or Indian.

hadi awang and pas "There are many aspects of the New Economic Policy which are good and can be implemented, but its failure is because of Umno's abuse of power, corruption and double standards," PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang said.

"We will keep plans to help the poor Malays and the underprivileged, but we cannot rob non-Malays of their rights in the name of protecting Malay rights," he said.

Hadi Awang said the unfair elements would be jettisoned, but he did not specify exactly how the policy would now operate in the areas under PAS control.

The NEP was launched in the early 1970s in an effort to improve the lot of Malays, who dominate the population in the multiracial country, and to close the wealth gap with ethnic Chinese who are prominent in business.

However, it has been criticised for failing to address hardcore poverty and improperly benefiting rich Malay entrepreneurs.

### **Open-tender system**

The DAP, which took power in industrialised Penang on yesterday, has said it will dismantle the discriminatory policies in the state that is home to many foreign high-tech firms, including Intel and Sony.

Hadi Awang said PAS-led state governments would implement an open-tender system for government contracts similar to that announced by new Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng.

The three opposition parties, including Anwar's PKR, are to rule most of the five states in various coalitions.

However, they have large ideological differences and Abdul Hadi said PAS has yet to hold direct talks with the DAP.

The DAP was part of an opposition coalition with PAS and PKR in the 1999 general elections,

but they broke ranks in 2001 because of the Islamic party's call for an Islamic state - a goal that has since been dropped.

Abdul Hadi said PKR was now acting as a mediator as the parties attempt to cobble together coalitions in newly acquired states.

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