

Opposition leader Wan Azizah unveils bold agenda
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The nation's first female parliamentary opposition leader, Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, today unveiled an ambitious agenda to boost economic growth and fight corruption. MCPX

raja nazrin undp book launch 210807 wan azizahWan Azizah is head of PKR and wife of former deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim, who rallied the three-party opposition alliance to unprecedented gains in March 8 elections.

The 55-year-old mother of six, who wears a traditional Muslim headscarf, set up PKR after Anwar was sacked and jailed in 1998 on sex and corruption charges. He is not allowed to stand for office until April.

Wan Azizah unveiled a five-point manifesto which focused on anti-corruption measures and equality for the various races in Malaysia, a country dominated by Muslim Malays but with large ethnic Chinese and Indian minorities.

"I will do my utmost to take this unique opportunity to move Malaysia forward towards a new dawn while continuing to safeguard the rights of all Malaysians under the constitution," she said.

The opposition parties claimed more than a third of parliamentary seats and five of the 13 states in the general elections, their successes giving them a new-found status and authority.

Access to equal opportunities

Wan Azizah said that on the economy, she will push for measures to encourage growth and attract investors, and ensure equal treatment for all - in a reference to positive discrimination policies for Malays which the opposition wants to reform.

"By continuing to speak out against corruption and wastage, we will continue to help guide Malaysia to a more robust, poverty-free economy," she said.

Wan Azizah said the opposition will ensure that race relations, which have become increasingly tense in recent years, will be strengthened.

"While we will ensure that the position of the Malays will not be threatened, the access to equal opportunities of Chinese, Indians, Ibans, Kadazans and all Malaysians will be protected with equal vigour," she said.

Wan Azizah said the opposition would push for free and fair judicial institutions to allow democracy to flourish, and that the Malaysian media must be given the freedom to report freely and fairly.

Opposition leaders say Parliament is expected to convene at the end of April or in early May.

Barisan Nasional will have 140 lawmakers in the new 222-seat parliament, against 199 in the outgoing 219-seat parliament. The opposition alliance won 80 seats from just 19

previously, with PKR in the lead.

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