

**I'll be PM in three years, says Anwar**  
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Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim today confidently predicted he would be prime minister within three years, sketching out the first rough timetable for his dramatic political comeback.

"I don't think we have established a definite clear time-frame when I will take over (as prime minister) but it certainly wouldn't reach three years ... much earlier than that," the former deputy premier told AFP.

"(But) I am not in a rush," he added.

anwar ibrahim april 14 kg baru event 150408Anwar, heir-apparent to long-time former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad before being sacked and jailed a decade ago, has emerged as a serious threat to the ruling coalition after the opposition's strong showing in parliamentary polls.

He became free to run for office again last week, when a five-year ban stemming from his corruption conviction expired, and claims he has the support of enough defectors to topple the government.

The Barisan Nasional coalition has ruled Malaysia for more than half-a-century since the former colony gained independence from Britain but has been rocked by its unprecedented electoral setback in March.

The Pakatan Rakyat opposition alliance claimed more than a third of parliamentary seats and five states in the polls, putting Mahathir's successor, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, under heavy pressure.

Anwar, 60, pledged more effective governance and to wipe out corruption and promote racial equality, addressing some of the public's major concerns.

"Our reform programme will certainly be more secure. We will push for a market economy, judicial independence and equality for all Malaysians," he said.

**They could 'jump ship by August'**

Anwar also repeated his claim that lawmakers from Sabah and Sarawak states had indicated interest in defecting from the ruling coalition to the opposition. He spoke to AFP at Kuala Lumpur airport on his way to Sabah.

"Lawmakers in the two states in Borneo island have approached me about switching sides, but so far none has declared their intentions publicly," he said.

Meanwhile, Anwar told reporters in Sabah that coalition lawmakers could jump ship by August after being sworn in at the end of April.

"It's all a matter of timing. Let parliament resume and they are sworn in as MPs (on April 28).... It could be the month after or by August," he said.

He added it would be done no later than Malaysia Day, which falls on Sept 16.

Anwar also said that if the opposition took power, Sabah and Sarawak would be able to keep 20 percent of revenue from the oil they produce, up from the current 5 percent.

"These are the oil-producing states, yet in the case of Sabah it is among the poorest states in the country," he said.

Anwar will travel to Sarawak tomorrow to rally support for the opposition and to press his own claims for power.

Analysts have backed Anwar's statement that he has enough support to rule, saying turmoil in the ruling coalition could hasten an exodus of lawmakers and propel him to power.

Prime Minister Abdullah is facing growing demands to quit, but has defiantly claimed a mandate to rule and refused to discuss a succession plan.

Anwar had previously been expected to re-enter parliament quickly through a by-election in one of the seats held by his PKR party, but says he is in no hurry to act and will instead focus on building up the opposition.

Some 20,000 supporters attended Anwar's rally last week. The opposition leader was released in 2004 after spending six years in jail.

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