

Pakatan to dump NEP if it seizes power
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Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim reiterated he would dismantle the controversial New Economic Policy (NEP) if he seizes power.

Anwar said he would replace the policy, which was launched in the early 1970s, with a system to boost all poor Malaysians, whether they are majority Malays or from the minority Chinese and Indian communities.

anwar pc on budget 2009 020908 01 "We will do everything in our power and disposal to help and assist the poor and the marginalised, which means the vast majority of the Malays and the poor Chinese and the poor Indians, but we do it on a needs basis," he said.

He also promised to abandon the Approved Permits (AP) scheme for importing cars, which it is claimed has corruptly enriched a small number of Malay entrepreneurs.

"Those talking about Malay dominance would realise that the AP is a classic case where the Malays and the Malay name has been abused, raped and plundered by the few," he told a press conference.

Anwar, a former deputy premier and finance minister who was sacked and jailed a decade ago, has vowed to topple the government with the help of defectors within weeks.

He accused embattled Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi of spending his way out of trouble with a 2009 budget packed with perks and tax cuts, and said if he comes to power he would reduce the projected 2008 budget deficit of 4.8 percent of GDP.

"I suspect Abdullah feels that his days are numbered, so he spends as much as possible because he knows the next government has got to deal with the debts," he said.

Rich Malays cash in NEP perks

The NEP was launched two years after racial riots broke out in 1969, in an effort to narrow the wealth gap between the Chinese - who control the business sector - and Malays, who dominate government.

But critics say it has failed and that the policy's beneficiaries have been Malay entrepreneurs who cash in on an array of perks including discounts on property purchases and specially allocated government projects.

Anwar's opposition gained unprecedented ground against the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition in March general elections, after successfully garnering support from across Malaysia's racial spectrum.

The 61-year-old opposition leader - himself a Malay - has also had to defend himself against allegations he has sold out the interests of the majority community in return for political gains.

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