'They are my backbone, strength'

PM reflects on the two women who shaped his life - his mother and wife

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KUALA LUMPUR: It was a faded photo of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, showing him standing next to his wife and mother in their younger days.

But it held significance for the Prime Minister, as he pointed out that Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and his late mother Che Yan Hamid Hussein were the two most important women in his life.

"They are my backbone, a source of strength in demanding for justice and continuing the struggle for the people," he said in his social media post yesterday to mark International Women's Day.

Wonder women: (Left) Anwar together with Wan Azizah and his mother in this photo taken from his Facebook page. (Top) Anwar and Wan Azizah posing with (from left) Women, Family and Community Development secretary-general Datuk Dr Maziah Che Yusoff, Nancy, deputy minister Datuk Seri Dr Noraini Ahmad and deputy-director general Hanani Sapit at the launch of 2025 International Women Day in Kuala Lumpur.
- FAIHAN GHANI/The Star

Referring to the occasion, he said that it was a day to celebrate "the courage, sacrifice, and extraordinary role of women in shaping a more just and prosperous society".

"We will continue to fight for the rights and dignity of women, ensuring that they are given equal space and opportunities in all aspects of life," he said.

Yesterday, Anwar was also present at an event to celebrate International Women's Day.

In his speech, he said the government sector should set an example for private companies in empowering women in leadership roles.

While the leadership in the public sector had shown an increase in female participation, he said more can be done within government-linked companies.

"If the government could not prove that female's participation in the top leadership is possible,- then it will be harder for the private sectors to do the same," he said.

Anwar also launched the National Women's Policy during the event.

All ministries should pay attention to it to ensure the implementation of policies and action plans related to female empowerment, he said.

Also present yesterday was Women, Family, and Community Development Minister Datuk Nancy Shukri.

She urged for women's empowerment to be prioritised as a key agenda in the national development to build an inclusive and progressive Malaysia.

This could be achieved through the implementation of strategic measures to further boost women's involvement in key decision-making roles and shape the nation's direction.

She said that this year's theme "Wanita Beraspirasi, Membina Legasi"was selected to emphasise that women, too, can realise their dreams in various fields including economy, politics, education, technology and society.

However, she acknowledged that empowering women in Malaysia was not without its challenges.

"The society needs to eliminate the stigma against women who choose to pursue a career, while individuals must also continue to fight for their rights and opportunities," she said.