

**Pakatan targets rural women in march to Putrajaya**  
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**By Hafidz Baharom**

SHAH ALAM, Sept 14 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) is now aiming for the rural women vote in its bid to capture Putrajaya in the next general election, under a new programme that will complement its strength in urban areas.

Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim launched the Agenda Wanita Malaysia last night, urging PR's women wings to widen support in rural areas which are a stronghold of the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) government.

"The challenge for us lies especially in approaching rural women, and we will require everyone within the coalition to work together if we want to take Putrajaya.

"I have faith that we can achieve this if we make a little push for it," Anwar said in his speech.

The PR's women agenda contains seven key focus areas which would include changes in government and education policies that can only be carried out if the pact forms the federal government.

In their speeches, women division heads from PR coalition partners PKR, PAS and the DAP stressed the need to empower, acknowledge and address the gender gap which discriminates women in the country.

"We must not only aid women, but also come up with ways to empower them to move the nation forward," said Wanita PKR chief Zuraida Kamaruddin.

Anwar launching PR's Agenda Wanita Malaysia in Shah Alam on September 13, 2012. With him are leaders of PR component parties.

Dewan Muslimat PAS leader Siti Zailah Mohd Yusof said the agenda offered was to "save Malaysia".

"It is to raise women to a higher standard, to uphold and acknowledge their roles in Malaysia's continuing prosperity," she added.

DAP Wanita chief Chong Eng said while men and women have their differences, there should not be any gaps in equality.

"There are now more women than men in universities, but less women in the workforce, they earn lower salaries for the same job and are scarce the higher you look up the corporate ladder," she added.

Her colleague, DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang, said the BN government had not kept its promises to women.

"The prime minister, also being the minister for women, should be a 'high water mark', but instead it has become the lowest point of women's rights in Malaysia," Lim said in his speech.

Zuraida said that PR's women wings will go to the public on September 23, starting with Selangor.

The Malaysian Insider had reported last month that women's votes, once considered a certainty for Umno-BN, would be targeted by PR for the upcoming general election which must be called by April next year.

The next national polls are being seen as the closest in history, with more than 12 million voters registered to date who will decide the next federal government.

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