

**Anwar vows to put more cash in Malaysians' pockets**  
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**By Lisa J Ariffin**

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 26 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) has promised to raise the disposable income of Malaysians in an alternative set of Budget proposals announced today, just two days before the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) unveils the government's official proposals for spending and taxes.

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, the de facto leader of the PR pact, said disposable income would rise through measures such as cheaper car prices, abolishment of tolls and waiver of student loans, as the opposition sought to pre-empt Datuk Seri Najib Razak's Budget announcement on Friday.

Anwar said a PR government would be able to pay for the proposed measures not through raising taxes but by plugging leakages that arise as a result of inefficiencies and corruption.

"We will make the policies under the PR government more transparent to avoid leakages and waste through corruption," he said today while unveiling PR's alternative budget 2013 here.

"We will also make the process in procuring government contracts more transparent and have open tenders to end the monopoly by families of ministers," he added, taking a swipe at his BN colleagues.

Anwar also said PR's budget would present a more "realistic" picture of Malaysia's economic situation next year, forecasting the size of the Malaysian economy at RM1,064 billion with an economic growth rate of 5.2 per cent, inflation rate of three per cent and a budget deficit ease of 3.5 per cent.

"BN has never fulfilled any of their economic forecast. They have never been honest about their figures," he said, pointing out that Putrajaya had failed to register the targeted growth of six per cent for eight consecutive quarters from Q3 2010 onwards.

"PR will be honest about the figures and in turn, present a more realistic forecast on the direction of the economy," he added.

Prime Minister Najib is also expected to unveil a voter-pleasing budget on Friday, placing the priority on winning a tough election above addressing the country's rising debt burden.

Economists say Najib will likely delay much-needed reforms to broaden Malaysia's tax base and reduce its dependence on oil revenues to at least next year, while announcing measures to help poorer families struggling with rising living costs.

Both Anwar and Najib are using populist approaches to court votes in what is expected to be the most keenly-contested elections in the country's recent history, and both will avoid promising any tough measures for reforms.

Najib must call an election by next April and has already announced a series of handouts this year, including RM2.6 billion ringgit in cash payments to poor families, to shore up support for BN.

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