

Anwar will stand for BN

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Encik Anwar Ibrahim, who resigned as president of Abim on Saturday, will contest the general election on a Barisan Nasional ticket.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad indicated this today when he announced Encik Anwar's decision to become an active member of Umno.

"We hope to work together for the betterment of the people of Malaysia," the Prime Minister told reporters at a joint Press conference with the former Muslim youth leader who has been a prominent social critic and political activist since the late '60s.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, however, declined to state where Encik Anwar would stand for

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Encik Anwar said he had not made any deals with the Prime Minister; nor was there any precondition to his joining Umno, but "we had agreed on questions of principle and questions of justice, the implementation of Islamic values and the importance of unity.

"The field is open for me to present my ideas," he said.

He said through his contacts with organisations critical of the Government, he could contribute by bringing their aspirations to the attention of the administration and establishing rapport between two opposing sides.

He also said he would not cut off his ties with the Pas leaders who had been his close friends. "I want to maintain the relationship as I value their friendship. I will continue the rapport I had with them," he said.

ISA review

Asked about his stand on the Societies Act over which he leads an organisation pushing for its repeal, Encik Anwar said he is still committed to that stand and would in no way compromise it. "I will try my best to persuade the Prime Minister."

Similarly, on the Internal Security Act of which he has been an insistent and vocal critic,

Asked if his resignation as president of Abim would lead to a split in the organisation, Encik Anwar said if he felt Abim would become weak with his entry into Umno, he would have postponed his decision.

Asked how he felt about making the plunge into active politics, he said: "I feel a bit nervous. It's something new. But I will settle down ... after a few hours."

Interviewed at another function later, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Encik Anwar Ibrahim would play a "key role" in Government, but declined to say if he would be made a Minister.

"I will make the decision when the time comes," Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said.

He pointed out that a "key role" in Govern-

election, saying that "whether I give an Umno seat or not (to Encik Anwar) depends on the feelings of the division concerned."

Ideals

But he left little doubt that Encik Anwar would indeed be an Umno candidate as he extended an unprecedented official public welcome to the former Abim leader. "We in Umno will value the services and contributions that Encik Anwar can give to the party's struggle," said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir.

Encik Anwar, who was tipped to take over the leadership of Pas upon Datuk Asri Muda's retirement, today explained at length why he joined Umno.

"I found no other way to defend my ideals than to give my full support to Dr Mahathir and his administration," he said.

"I chose Umno because Umno has the potential, the scope and the readiness to accept me and the policies I struggle for and because of my belief and trust in the leadership of Dr

Mahathir whom I've known from my university days.

"I believe strongly that he has brought about a healthy climate for the development of Muslim society, for the development of the Malays and other communities and for the progress of justice and unity."

He said since the leadership had been responsive enough (to criticisms and demands for change), he should be responsible enough to support that leadership.

"The change in the Government's direction, the dedication of the leadership, the personal style of the Prime Minister and his commitment to combat corruption, to alleviate the problems of the poor, to disseminate the intrinsic values of Islam and his commitment to a united Malaysia are all values that are not inconsistent with my own ideals," said Encik Anwar.

He stressed that although he has resigned as president of Abim and has become an Umno member, he would not resign the principles and ideals he fought for.

Encik Anwar said he still feels that "at the least there should be a review of the ISA.

"I'm confident that this Government would not detain people easily and thoughtlessly."

Asked whether his entry into Umno meant a rejection of Pas, Encik Anwar said in the first place, it was wrong to assume that Abim had always identified itself with, or was more sympathetic to, the Pas struggle.

Because Abim has been a vocal critic of the Government, people had naturally identified the organisation with Pas, he added.

He said times have changed, referring to the past when there was little rapport or dealings between Abim and Government leaders.

He said Abim as an Islamic movement would remain critical and responsibly so.

ment could take many forms, but "certainly we value the contributions that could be made by Anwar."