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Shahnon changes his mind, wants to defend seat

PENANG, Mon. - In an about-turn, Datuk Shahnon Ahmad today said he hoped to defend his Sik parliamentary seat in Kedah in the general election.

Just six days ago, in an interview with Utusan Malaysia, the 70-year-old Professor Emeritus who in 1999 published a political satire entitled Shit, on the bitter controversy between former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, said his poor health had made him decide to make way for a younger and more qualified Pas candidate.

However, in a telephone interview with the New Straits Times, the renowned novelist and author of several books on Malay literature, which collectively earned him the National Literature Award in 1982, said he hoped the Pas leadership would give him another chance at the constituency, formerly a bastion of Umno in Kedah.

"Although I am not feeling well, I hope our leadership will give me another chance," he said in the brief interview, interrupted several times by his incessant coughing.