

Anwar to run for PKR president despite ban
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Former deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim will run for president of his party despite being banned from holding public office.

"The party has nominated him to contest for the next president's post. He has accepted that he will run and if he is elected in May, then will lead the party," said Tian Chua, information chief of the opposition PKR.

While this may violate the five-year ban on Anwar from holding a political post, the party would argued that it couldn't stop its members from nominating him.

The party plans to appeal to the all-powerful Registrar of Societies (ROS) to allow Anwar to take over as PKR leader.

Under Section 9A (4) of the Societies Act, ROS is empowered to examine and consider the possibility of exempting or reducing the ban on Anwar from taking part in active politics.

However, should the registrar refuse to waive the ban on Anwar, the party would then go to court the challenge the decision.

Should the party fail in the court appeal, Anwar would have to step down or the party could be deregistered.

Chua said Anwar's decision to run for party president signaled his commitment to the opposition, dispelling rumours that he may return to the ruling Umno.

"We feel it is time that he can reposition himself officially as the leader for Keadilan and dismiss a lot of uncertainties that he is just waiting for an opportunity to return to Umno," said Chua.

Party polls in May

Parti Keadilan Rakyat, or PKR, is formally run by Anwar's wife and its only sitting parliamentary member, Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

The party is currently holding division meetings and a sizable proportion have nominated Anwar for president. PKR will be holding its party polls in May in Seremban, Negri Sembilan.

In 1998, Anwar was sacked from all his government posts and subsequently convicted for corruption and sodomy. He was released in 2004 after spending six years in prison when the Federal Court quashed his sodomy conviction.

However, elections laws prohibit him from returning to active politics until after April 2008 in view of his first conviction.

The ban took effect from the day Anwar completed his first sentence on April 15,

2003.

A general election must be held by early 2009, but there is speculation that Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will call for a snap poll, effectively preventing Anwar from taking part.

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