

**It's Kulim if court orders by-election**  
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Opposition icon Anwar Ibrahim said today that he aims to return to parliament for the first time in a decade later this year if a court orders a by-election in Kulim-Bandar Baharu.  
MCPX

"I can now confirm that I will contest a by-election in Kulim," said Anwar at a rally of 8,000 people in the constituency tonight.

A high court in Kedah will hear a challenge on Aug 19 asking it to invalidate the result in the Kulim-Bandar Baharu seat that was won by his PKR in March 8 general elections.

anwar ibrahim and pkr speech Anwar said that if the court declares the result null and void he will contest the ensuing by-election.

"My plan is to contest in the Kulim-Bandar Baharu seat. I am optimistic of victory," he told AFP earlier today.

"The constituency neighbours my hometown of Permatang Pauh in Penang. I am familiar with the locals there."

The incumbent PKR parliamentarian Zulkifli Noordin has said he would make way for Anwar.

"He understands that this is a political struggle," said Anwar of Zulkifli.

"He is paving the way for me (to return to Parliament)," he added in appreciation for the Kulim MP.

"God willing, Kulim will create history."

A return to parliament would be a next step in the political rehabilitation of Anwar, who was sacked as deputy premier in 1998 and later jailed on sodomy and corruption charges.

The sex conviction was overturned but the corruption count barred him from public office until April.

It is unclear whether the court's decision to postpone the hearing of the Kulim poll petition from July 22 to Aug 19 - and this could be delayed even further - will hamper Anwar's plan for a speedy political comeback.

Should Anwar decide he could not wait, another option is for a PKR MP to resign and force a by-election.

**Sodomy allegations an 'additional burden'**

Anwar, who was considered the heir apparent to then prime minister Mahathir Mohamad when he was fired, was to formally announce his plan at a party rally in the constituency later Sunday.

bandar kulim baru kedah parliament seat results 180708However, he admitted that new sodomy allegations levelled against him by a 23-year-old male former aide had put an "additional burden" on his family and his return to politics.

He said the claims were fabricated to prevent him seizing power and showed he posed a serious threat to Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's coalition, which has ruled Malaysia for more than 50 years.

The opposition parties - Malay-led multiracial PKR, Chinese-dominated DAP and the Islamic PAS - humbled the governing Barisan Nasional coalition with unprecedented gains in the March elections.

Rallied by Anwar, the parties won more than a third of parliamentary seats and five of the 13 states in the general election, delivering Barisan Nasional its worst result since 1969.

In April, they announced a strategic alliance, and Anwar said that PAS and DAP leaders had promised to mobilise their supporters for a by-election.

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