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Anwar's return plan

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KUALA LUMPUR: Parti Keadilan Rakyat de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim promised a by-election this year to enable him to return to Parliament.

He also said he was continuing talks with potential Barisan Nasional defectors to form the government in which he would become prime minister.

He said he met several BN members of parliament during a visit to the Philippines recently but declined to reveal their names.

At least 30 MPs would need to cross over to allow the Pakatan Rakyat coalition to form the Federal Government.

"People who talk to us have to fly very quietly to neighbouring capitals just to convey their message and positions. We have to protect our friends and the other MPs," Anwar said after meeting PKR supreme council members yesterday at the party's new headquarters in Merchant Square, Tropicana, here.

BN component parties, particularly in Sabah and Sarawak, have consistently denied the former deputy prime minister's frequent claims of impending crossovers.

Rumours of multi-million ringgit offers to buy over BN MPs have, in turn, been denied by the PKR.

Anwar described speculation that defectors would not be welcomed by some in the Pakatan Rakyat as "irrelevant".

"Anyone who subscribes to the policies and agenda of Pakatan Rakyat will be considered part of the team," he said.

Anwar claimed the PKR had more than 300,000 members and had received 50,000 applications, including from the BN.

There was no "moral basis" for Umno and BN MPs to stay with the present government, he said. "It is a heavy price on the nation to keep harping on the racist agenda and sentiments. I will not create political instability."

He also vowed to resign if he failed to reduce fuel prices should he come to power.