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Anwar to contest in by-election soon

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PETALING JAYA: Pakatan Rakyat (PR) and Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday said he has received the green light from the Registrar of Societies (ROS) on his eligibility to contest an election, and will soon be doing so in a by-election.

Speaking to reporters after chairing the PKR supreme council meeting at the party's new headquarters in Damansara yesterday, Anwar replied in the affirmative when being asked if he thought it was a good time for a by-election that he had earlier spoken about.

"Yes, yes. I got the letter from the ROS. And we have cleared the matter with our lawyers who have said we don't need a letter from the Attorney-General's Chambers.

"The letter from ROS is sufficient so we will use that," he said.

When asked where he would contest, Anwar replied in jest: "Where do you want me to contest?"

He said he is collecting feedback and a number of parliamentarians had volunteered to hand him their seat to contest. He confirmed

it will take place this year.

Anwar reiterated his claim that MPs from the Barisan Nasional (BN) were interested in switching parties.

"Firstly, we have to deliberate this at length with the PR leaders and secondly, you have to appreciate the fact that we have to do it very cautiously and being mindful of the fact that the system is quite repressive in this country. People wanting to talk to us have had to fly out very quietly to neighbouring capitals to convey us their message."

He admitted meeting some BN MPs on his recent trip to Manila.

On the new subsidy plan which saw the price of petrol go up by 78 sen to RM2.70 per litre - "the highest single increase in the world" - he said it is a failure of managing the country's economy, and kept to his promise of reducing the price should the PR government take over the administration.

Asked how they would do it, Anwar said the mechanism will be announced when the time is right.

Dismissing the act as one to gain popularity, Anwar argued that if the world market prices were soaring, Malaysia's revenue was also multiplying by the billions.

He called for Petronas reports and accounts to be open for questioning, even at Parliament.

"I'm a firm believer of market economy and I don't believe that huge subsidies will be sustainable in the long term but I am also a humanist. I believe in humane economics. You must support the market economy but you must tamper with a strong genuine interest in the welfare of the people in the principle of social justice, otherwise an economy cannot be sustainable."

The PR leadership meeting will discuss this matter tonight (Monday).

At the press conference, Anwar announced the elevation of eight people to the PKR supreme council - Dr Mohd Noor Manuti, Nordin Mahmud, Nik Mahmood Nik Hassan, Syed Shahir Syed Mohamud, Dr Xavier Jayakumar, Hee Loy Sian, Datuk Yeop Adlan and Low Chee Chong.

He welcomed four new members - former Malay Chamber of Commerce deputy president Datuk Dr Mohd Adam Harun, former Umno Mentakab deputy division chief Datuk Dr Mat Lazim Derani, former Wanita MCA Central Committee member Ling Lae Feei and TAFE College founder and Olympia College principal Dr M. Raken.