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Anwar turns ugly with jibe at Dr M

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RANTING AWAY: Also calls for premature death of BN and component parties

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DATUK Seri Anwar Ibrahim on Wednesday called on former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to "just die" instead of campaigning for Barisan Nasional.

"Sudah mau mati, dah 83 tahun. Berapa la lama lagi? Kalau dah nak mati, mati saja lah (It's almost time for him to die, at 83 years old. How long more? If you are going to die, just die)," he said at a ceramah in Kampung Abdullah here.

(Dr Mahathir is actually 87 years old.)

Anwar was Dr Mahathir's deputy when the latter was prime minister but was sacked following allegations of abuse of power and sexual misconduct.

Anwar added in a sarcastic tone that he had forgiven Dr Mahathir, as he knew the latter would not survive a prison term and that there were no prisons wanting to accept him as he was too old.

He also called for the premature death of BN, and its component parties, the MCA and MIC.

Earlier, he had accused BN of trying to prevent DAP from using the party's "Rocket" symbol for the election.

"When Pakatan said fine, we will use the moon (Pas's logo) nationwide, BN panicked and pushed to say DAP can use their rocket logo," claimed Anwar.

He also took a swipe at Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor and Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

Present were other opposition coalition candidates, including Johor PKR chief Datuk Chua Jui Meng, who is contesting the Segamat parliamentary seat and Pas vice-president Salahuddin Ayub who is contesting the Pulai parliamentary and Nusajaya state seats.

Salahuddin had also taken up the "premature death" theme, saying BN was irrelevant and its leaders were "almost dying".

He said the Gelang Patah BN candidate, outgoing Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman, was a reluctant candidate and DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang would bury him there.

Dr Mahathir, when asked to comment on Anwar's remarks, said he was merely exercising his rights of freedom of speech.

"The opposition leaders have yet to form the government, but they have asked the people to shut up.

"People had used vulgar words against me when I was the prime minister.

"Some of them had even labelled me as *firaun* (pharaoh), a racist and an ultra-Malay but I never asked the authorities to arrest them.

"So now, why are they trying to deny my right to speak up?"

