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Ibrahim spoiling Dr M's electoral ambition

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WHETHER Perkasa president Datuk Ibrahim Ali is a maverick or gadfly, he is set to play a significant role in the upcoming general election.

At the Perkasa annual general meeting on Sunday, he announced that the Malay rights movement would contest in 50 constituencies, thus sending shock waves in opposition circles.

This threat, if it materialises, would divide the already fragmented opposition even further.

One of the losers would be Perkasa's former supporter and winner of its Bintang Medal, former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is chairman of Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM).

"Our focus is on Malay-majority parliamentary seats, which will almost certainly be contested by Pas and Pakatan Harapan.

"We will go in.

"We believe whoever wins in Malay areas, it would not affect the Malays," said Ibrahim.

"Candidates would be chosen



from those with a good education and career, and would include former high-ranking civil servants, experienced lawyers, professionals and religious figures," he said, urging people to give his candidates a chance.

Ibrahim was once an Umno member of parliament for Pasir Mas in 1986 but later jumped ship to Semangat 46 and kept the seat in 1990.

In the 1999 general election, he switched back to Umno but lost the seat to Pas.

In the 2004 election, he stood as an independent and spoiled the chances of Umno, giving victory to Pas.

In 2008, he stood on a Pas ticket

and won but lost in 2013 (to Pas) while contesting as an independent. In 2008, he founded Perkasa of which he is president.

Perkasa is Ibrahim Ali's answer to the changed political landscape following the 2008 general election, where Barisan Nasional lost five states and its two-thirds majority.

Since then, he has been courting one controversy after another.

"Ibrahim Ali is a classic political nuisance," said one political analyst, who declined to be named.

"He wants to spoil the opposition soup by dividing the fragmented opposition votes even further."

"And he is going for seats that hurt the main opposition most — in the rural Malay areas," the analyst said, adding that "even if his candidates whittle away 1,000 votes or less in each constituency, it would be a great gift to BN".

Unless PPBM resolves this dilemma of multiparty contests, it stands to suffer the most and emerge with few seats, if any.