

Dr M: Anwar afraid to lose in Perak
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By Mohd Farhan Darwis

KUALA LUMPUR, April 6 — Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad mocked his long time arch-nemesis Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today for being too cowardly to contest a seat in Perak this Election 2013.

The former prime minister, whose sacking of Anwar in 1998 effectively ended the latter's tenure in government, said he knew all along that the latter would not move from his safe seat in Permatang Pauh and face possible defeat in Perak.

"He's too afraid of fighting in Perak... he chose to return to Permatang Pauh because he's used to winning (there).

"When he first said he'd move to Perak, I did not believe him," the still-influential former Umno president said in a Perkasa function at SMK Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah in Shah Alam this afternoon.

Anwar, now the de facto leader of federal opposition pact Pakatan Rakyat (PR) raised eyebrows earlier this week when he announced his interest in contesting a seat in Perak, a state that PR deems possible to win in Election 2013.

The move appeared to be a strategic one as PR leaders believe that Anwar's presence in Perak would give the opposition the much-needed boost to secure its position in the northern state.

Before Anwar announced that he would stay and defend Permatang Pauh last night, talk was that the veteran politician would take on Second Finance Minister Datuk Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah in the Malay-majority Tambun, where the Umno leader is seen as well-received by voters.

When explaining his decision to Permatang Pauh voters last night, Anwar said he would stay in the Penang seat for the sake of showing his thanks to his supporters there.

"While my intention was to help the campaign in Perak and if I look at it rationally and strategically, it would have to be Tambun but because of the heart, soul, relationship and spirit of Permatang Pauh in their support for me, I have to defend my seat," he said.

He said he had not forgotten the tremendous support he and his wife, Datuk Seri Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, have always received from the people of Permatang Pauh, even when he was in jail.

"I will continue to defend this seat but I apologise as I will be going nationwide to campaign so I will only be here once in a while," he said to a captive crowd of about 2,000 people at a football field in the middle of a residential area.

Wan Azizah held the Permatang Pauh seat for two terms and gave up the seat for Anwar in late 2008.

Anwar won the seat in the by-election in August 2008, after Wan Azizah resigned from the seat, against Datuk Arif Shah Omar Shah by a 16,210 majority.

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