

**An unlikely champion for PAS election petition – ex-judge who was Umno lawyer
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One of the country's top former judges and an Umno lawyer is likely to make a return to the courtroom soon, but this time as a lawyer for Pakatan Rakyat in its petition against electoral fraud.

Retired Federal Court judge Datuk Seri Gopal Sri Ram is almost certain to represent PAS to challenge the Pasir Panjang state election result in Perak.

Sources close to the PAS legal team told The Malaysian Insider that the 69-year-old, regarded as a respectable legal mind, was only awaiting instructions from his client.

"He will be in court only for the election petition case. His appearance will be regarded as 'national service' in view of new developments," the source said.

His name is listed among the several prominent lawyers roped in by PAS to mount challenges in six petitions filed by the party's candidates in Perak.

The Pasir Panjang petition will be heard before judge Abang Iskandar Abang Hashim.

If Sri Ram is given the nod, he will be donning the gown after a lapse of about 20 years.

As a lawyer, he was held in high esteem for his quick tongue and sharp mind in the courtroom.

He was also legal adviser to Umno from 1987 to 1994.

He appeared for the party when 12 delegates filed a suit to declare illegal the 1987 bitterly fought election and general assembly meeting.

Sri Ram started his legal career in 1970 and has the distinction of being appointed directly as Court of Appeal judge in 1994.

He was elevated to the Federal Court in 2009, a year before retirement.

Currently a legal consultant, Sri Ram has written about 800 judgments and that included administrative, constitutional, industrial, company and criminal laws.

For the election petitions, he is also tasked with advising other legal team members on the petitions.

Apart from Pasir Panjang, PAS is challenging the election results for the state seats of Manong, Selama, Lubuk Merbau, Rungkup and Manjoi.

In all six seats, PAS lost to Barisan Nasional's Umno candidates with majorities of between only 53 and 619 votes.

In the 2008 election, PAS candidate Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin had wrested the Pasir Panjang from BN.

However, in the May 5 polls, BN won the seat with a 304-vote majority.

BN went on to form the state government after winning 31 seats compared with Pakatan Rakyat (DAP, PAS and Parti Keadilan Rakyat) which secured 28 seats.

The position of the BN government would be unstable should the election court order a re-election in at least three seats contested by PAS. – July 1, 2013.

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