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Malaysian politician Anwar Ibrahim speaks at the Ho Rih Hwa Leadership Lecture in Singapore, September 20, 2018.

PETALING JAYA - Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has admitted feeling that it should have been him who was sworn in as the seventh prime minister of the country, and not Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, when he was watching the swearing-in ceremony on May 10.

The PKR president-elect said this when asked during a lecture in Singapore on what was going through his mind at the time, reported Channel News Asia.

"You want me to be honest or politically correct?"

"(If) Politically correct, of course, I rejoiced, everybody was so elated. Look, Mahathir's swearing-in, (signalled a) new era for Malaysia.

"He came up with a statement saying that once Pakatan Harapan wins, they will then submit an application to the King for an immediate pardon (for me)," Anwar said in a candid dialogue which was part of the Ho Rih Hwa lecture series with hundreds of students from various Singapore schools at the Singapore Management University (SMU) on Thursday (Sep 20)

"But I also felt that I should have been there, you know? I did, I did.

"I do not want to lie to you, I did think about this – it should be me, not you (Dr Mahathir)," he said, drawing laughter from the audience after a student posed the question.

Anwar was the deputy prime minister in 1998 when he was sacked by Dr Mahathir.

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He will be contesting the Port Dickson by-election on Oct 13.

In the event that the PKR president-elect wins the Negri Sembilan parliamentary seat, he will return to the Dewan Rakyat as an MP, allowing the transition of the country's leadership to take place as per Pakatan Harapan's agreement that he would take over from Dr Mahathir.

Dr Mahathir has said that he would honour the agreement – that he would be interim Prime Minister for two years before handing over the reins to Anwar.