

# Dr M: Outsiders unaware of my ties with Anwar

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Assurances by Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim of a smooth transition of power and of a no-contest for the top party posts should put an end at attempts to create suspicion between them.

The Prime Minister said rumours of a rift were designed to pit him against Anwar so that they would suspect each other.

Dr Mahathir said: "I have good relations with my deputy, we meet almost every day, every morning.

"He tells me what he is doing and asks my advice and I sometimes ask for his advice. We get on very well together."

He said this at a Press conference at the end of the first day of the Umno Annual General Assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre today.

He added that "outsiders" were not aware of this relationship.

The Prime Minister also referred to publications depicting pictures of him and Anwar looking opposite ways.

"I think you shouldn't resort to that kind of dirty tricks. You can sell newspapers and magazines without being dirty. Go and get some stories on the mass murderer in Britain, go and buy stories from them.

"You are so lacking in skills to sell your paper (that) you have to resort to selling, practically, dirty stories."

Asked whether his assurance of a smooth transition of power was an attempt to take the heat off next year's party elections, Dr Mahathir said that was not his intention.

He said some people had deliberately created doubts and suspicion among the party leaders.

He said with Anwar's and his statements, there should not be any more basis to create any ill feeling.

Elaborating on his references to the issue in his

opening address earlier, Dr Mahathir said while the democratic process allowed contests, those involving the top posts could lead to a split.

He said this could happen if there was a keen contest using unhealthy tactics, where the winner did not get half of the party when he should get total support.

He said the event and aftermath of the 1987 party elections which led to the formation of Parti Melayu Semangat 46, should not be allowed to recur.

Asked whether his statement this morning showed that he doubted the confidence of party members to elect leaders, he said it was just a reminder "so that we do not forget the past".

This could be due to health reasons or other factors, he added.

On when the transition would take place, the Prime Minister said: "Soon... but this doesn't mean tomorrow or the day after or next year or... at some time, it is going to happen.

"I am now 70 years old, I have been leader of the party for 14 years and there will come a time when I have to make my exit. Exactly when, I don't know."

Asked whether the assurances by him and Anwar would quell the rumours, Dr Mahathir said they were doing all these to prove that there were differences, quarrel, or an attempt by Anwar to unseat the president.

However, the Prime Minister said both Anwar and him had been accused of planning and scheming this situation, purportedly to get the members to pass a resolution to support them to

stay in power.

"We never win... this is a no-win game," he said, adding that this was the work of the foreign media.

He was also asked to comment on calls by delegates for a stern action against the foreign Press. To this, Dr Mahathir said the people should stop buying these publications if they felt the reports were untrue.

When pointed out by a reporter that the foreign publications could not have carried such reports if sources they interviewed did not talk to them, he said:

"But you all are good journalists and reporters, you know how to phrase your questions to get the answer you want. Somehow or rather, inexperienced people interviewed get caught."

Dr Mahathir also defended the actions of the

party's management committee which came under fire from a number of delegates for their allegedly questionable decisions.

He said the committee's decisions were endorsed by the supreme council and that the decisions were made jointly. Therefore, the committee should not be solely blamed for it.

Maintaining that the committee had tried to be as fair as possible, Dr Mahathir said that generally the committee had treated the cases delicately, especially when there were as many as 3,000 reports.

On a letter reportedly sent to him by a party member and raised at the assembly by a delegate, the Prime Minister said it was the work of disgruntled people who did not get what they wanted.