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Mahathir-Power

MAHATHIR CONFIDENT OF SMOOTH POWER TRANSFER

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 1 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he is confident that there will be a peaceful and an orderly transfer of power when he retires in October this year.

He said acting PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang was indulging in "wishful thinking" when he said there would be a power struggle in Umno and the Barisan Nasional (BN) following his retirement.

The Prime Minister was speaking at a news conference at the New Year open house of BN component the People's Progressive Party (PPP) at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here.

Abdul Hadi's prediction was "wishful thinking" because it would not come true, he said when asked to comment on Abdul Hadi's frequent claims that there would be a power struggle in the ruling party after Dr Mahathir stepped down.

Dr Mahathir said there was no reason for any power struggle as it was general knowledge that Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi would succeed him.

Neither Umno nor BN would allow a power struggle to occur and any such attempts would be defeated, he said.

He said the question of Abdullah's successor as the Deputy Prime Minister would also be handled properly without any power struggle.

"We will also handle that one well. During my time it was also like that; it was the same during the time of Datuk (Tun) Hussein (Onn). We can manage these things."

Dr Mahathir was also asked to comment on his New Year message which contained a warning to foreign countries not to try to threaten the country's sovereignty.

"There are already arrogant countries claiming they have the right to take "pre-emptive action" or "forward defence" that would affect Malaysia," he said in his message.

"We'll give them a bloody nose; that's what I said. You try, you get it," he said.

Asked whether the statement was directed at Singapore, Dr Mahathir said it was up to the media to interpret, but stressed that he did not mention the republic.

-- BERNAMA

MFZ AZZ YBY