

Dr M: Raising transition issue too often is confusing

FUKUOKA: Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has expressed fear that the Malaysian leadership transition issue, if raised too often, could create a sense of uncertainty in the country.

He added that he had repeatedly said the transition would take place.

"If we are too obsessed with talking about the transition, many people will get a feeling of uncertainty - what happens when the change takes place?" he told Malaysian journalists after concluding his two-day working visit here yesterday.

According to an understanding worked out by the Pakatan Harapan coalition before it assumed power last year, Dr Mahathir is to step down as the prime minister after two or three years so that PKR president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim can succeed him.

Most recently, three NGOs had urged Dr Mahathir to hand over the post to Anwar by May 9, 2021.

The NGOs are the Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (Bersih 2.0), Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement and Gabungan Bertindak Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said he had hoped that his successor would continue the policies that had made the country successful when he stepped down previously but the individual who took over changed the policies.

"Now, when they hear that there is going to be a change, they will get worried. The fear is that all the policies will be changed," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this time, he did not think his successor would change all the policies.

"There may be some changes (in terms of) approach, but generally, I think there is no other way to govern Malaysia than what we have done for so long, which has brought us success," he said.

Asked if Anwar had stated the possibility of a policy change at their meetings, Dr Mahathir said the latter had expressed support for him.

"I don't think he will change (the policies). There should not be a sense of uncertainty," he said.

Asked to comment on a statement by Datuk Seri Najib Razak that he had misinterpreted the saying "cash is king" often associated with the former prime minister, Dr Mahathir laughed and said: "This Najib is fantastic; he's saying the meaning is different. But why did he not say this before?"

Najib had reportedly said he did not use "cash is king" by its literal meaning, but that the people were the king and that is why the cash was used to help them.

Dr Mahathir said if the people were king, then Najib should have taken care of them in other ways besides giving money. — Bernama



Sweet milestone: Dr Mahathir and his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali cutting a cake to celebrate their 63rd wedding anniversary during their official visit to Fukuoka. — Bernama