

Dr M gives assurance on stability of Pakatan Harapan

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by AFIQ AZIZ

DESPITE being labelled as a weak coalition and rumours of internal squabbles, Prime Minister (PM) Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has given the assurance that all component parties in Pakatan Harapan will remain intact.

The Pakatan Harapan chairman also rubbished claims by certain quarters that the ruling coalition is not on good terms with its component parties, saying that any differences will be discussed amicably among the party leaders.

"We are not weak. We are strong. We can work together in the Cabinet. Even at Pakatan Harapan meetings, we can discuss in a calm manner without much emotion and harsh words are not used against anyone.

"I think this coalition is functioning. It is not weak. We are of the same views on most of the issues that we have discussed," he told a press conference after chairing the Pakatan Harapan presidential

council meeting in Kuala Lumpur last Friday.

Dr Mahathir added that there is no faction among the coalition members since Pakatan Harapan took over the government in May last year.

The rumours that have been rife about the faction within Pakatan Harapan are believed to be the issue of handing over the premiership from Dr Mahathir to PKR president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, as well as the acceptance of former Umno members into Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia to strengthen the native-based party.

Prior to that, a veteran group known for being loyal to Anwar said there are individuals within PKR who want to stop the power transfer plan, scheduled to take place after two years of Dr Mahathir's tenure.

This came after PKR supreme council member and Pakatan Harapan secretary general Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah claimed that the matter on how long Dr Mahathir would lead the

country had never been discussed at the Pakatan Harapan presidential council meetings.

Last week, *Financial Times* reported that there were attempts within Pakatan Harapan to sabotage Anwar's path to become the next PM.

The Port Dickson MP, who was also present at the meeting, denied the report, saying that it was merely fake news.

"I never said that. No fake news will be entertained. What I said was you cannot deny that there are some elements that you may not agree, (and that) it is a democratic process," Anwar said.

"What is more important is that Pakatan Harapan has agreed, and Dr Mahathir and I have agreed," he said, adding that the issue of power transfer has been resolved between the two veteran politicians.

Meanwhile, Dr Mahathir also announced M Manogaran from DAP to contest in the Cameron Highlands parliamentary by-election scheduled on Jan 26.