

'PM's term was never discussed'

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Saifuddin: Pakatan only decided that Anwar would take over from Dr M

KUANTAN: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's term as the interim Prime Minister has never been discussed at Pakatan Harapan presidential council meetings, said its secretary-general Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah.

This was confirmed by both Amanah deputy president Datuk Salahuddin Ayub and PKR vice-president Dr Xavier Jayakumar.

Saifuddin, who is Foreign Affairs Minister, said Pakatan only decided that Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim would be appointed to the post after Dr Mahathir.

"Pakatan only made the decision and agreed that after Tun M, Anwar will be the next Prime Minister. We didn't discuss the rest as they understand each other.

"They should be able to determine the best time for transfer of

power and so on," he said when asked if there was a concrete agreement for Dr Mahathir to be interim Prime Minister for only two years.

Saifuddin, who is also Indera Mahkota MP, was met by reporters after attending a motivational workshop for Form Six students at SMK Astana here yesterday.

The issue of transfer of power was brought up by several delegates during the Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia annual general assembly over the weekend, who suggested that Dr Mahathir be allowed one full term as Prime Minister.

When contacted, Salahuddin said as far as he was concerned, there was no date or time limit set.

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eighth would be Anwar. That was clear," he said, adding that the issue was discussed in Pakatan before the general election.

"When we won the election and had the opportunity to form the government, then I think that issue

was understood together by all leaders in Pakatan.

"Give ample time for Dr Mahathir, then after that as it is stated in the consensus, Anwar will be the eighth prime minister," said the Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister.

Salahuddin also said that he was comfortable with Dr Mahathir's speech during Bersatu's AGM that he would keep to his word and make way for Anwar after two years.

"It is very clear (from his speech) that he will hand over his position to Anwar," he said.

Dr Xavier reiterated that the consensus in Pakatan during the formation of the coalition was for Dr Mahathir to lead the party into the election and then hand over the reins to Anwar.

"I think that was the principle on which this whole agreement was

done as far as the formation of Pakatan is concerned. So, I think those facts are still there, as far as I know," he said.

Dr Xavier, who is also the Water, Land and Natural Resources Minister, said Dr Mahathir's speeches at its AGM and various different platforms had indicated that "there will be a replacement for him".

"He himself has said that in the next general election, it would not be him who would be leading Pakatan and that he would definitely hand over the reins to the agreement that was made prior to the formation of Pakatan," he said.

This, he said, would "open the gates for the most promising person at present which is Anwar".

"If there are changes, then it is up to the decision of Pakatan at that time," he said. — Bernama