

People will decide who should be next PM: Anwar

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KUALA LUMPUR: Although there was an agreement that he would be the eighth prime minister after Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim strongly believes that it is the people who will ultimately decide on Malaysia's next prime minister.

Anwar said this when asked on the succession arrangement between both leaders by CNN International anchor Richard Quest during the CNN Talk Asia programme aired yesterday.

"Right now, yes. The arrangement is that I become prime minister next, but you are right, ultimately the people will decide," Anwar said, adding that he had no reason to doubt Mahathir's pledge in honouring the arrangement.

When asked why he wanted to work with the man who had once jailed him, Anwar replied that he did not hold any grudges and that the suffering he underwent was minimal compared to the suffering of the nation under the previous government.

"Why can't we overlook the negative side? It is not about the past but how we are going to work together to bring a new future for the country," he said.

"The whole administrative system had been compromised, with corruption being endemic and kleptocracy ruining the state.

"Something has to be done. To me, personally, it is satisfying to see that here comes a man to save the country from corruption and kleptocracy," he said,

explaining why he felt there was a need to work with Mahathir.

The PKR president said he was not surprised with the 14th general election outcome but instead was optimistic of the opposition's win then, though he was still in prison.

When asked if investors would put money in a country riddled with problems, Anwar said people were still keen on Malaysia, especially with the ease of doing business, greater transparency and clear economic policies.

"The reforms have just begun. In one or two years, I think we can see remarkable changes in this country in terms of foreign direct investments and tourism," he said.

On the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) scandal that has placed Malaysia in the global spotlight for the wrong reasons, Anwar admitted that Pakatan Harapan faced an uphill task in getting back the wealth lost and called for global cooperation to resolve the case.

"I believe that people and countries need not suffer just because of some greedy corporate leaders.

"They have to pay compensation for the losses, and for the damage to the country's image and the lost years," he said, referring to the actions being taken against multinational investment bank and financial services company, Goldman Sachs, to recover some of the losses. - Bernama