

Hard to set date: Tun M

> PM says preoccupation with Anwar's takeover would stifle focus on crucial national issues

BY AMAR SHAH MOHSEN

newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said it would be hard to set a date for Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to take over from him after two years as it would affect his focus and efforts in addressing major issues affecting the country.

"I have to make sure that I have solved most of the major problems before I hand (things) over. So a fixed period makes it very difficult for me to work," he said during an interview on BFM's *The Breakfast Grille* show yesterday.

On another matter, Mahathir put to rest rumours of a possible Cabinet reshuffle, claiming it will not happen during his tenure.

"No. Not during my time," he said when

asked if a reshuffle was necessary considering public criticism of the performance of some Cabinet ministers.

Mahathir said introducing new faces into the Cabinet would not necessarily improve performance, stressing that the current ministers have only had over a year's experience.

On Aug 22, Mahathir announced a portfolio reshuffle among ministers.

During the interview, Mahathir also said the government would not rule out the possibility of selling beleaguered Malaysia Airlines Bhd to a foreign buyer, if the price was right.

He said he was not against the idea of adopting a model similar to the Proton-Geely partnership.

In June, Mahathir said the government

would consider selling the airline if there was a good offer on the table, adding that despite the government's best efforts to aid the national carrier, it has failed.

Mahathir also said many Malaysians were expecting too much from the government, despite knowing the challenges it inherited since coming into power in May last year.

Speaking on Khazanah Nasional Bhd, he said the government-linked company had strayed from its core business.

"The original idea was that Khazanah should only buy shares that are not taken up by bumiputras, but now they have invested in a lot of other things."

Mahathir said he was not worried of a possible global recession in the coming years, saying Malaysia has individuals capable of ensuring the country remained on the right track.

On the proposed takeover of four tolled highways in the Klang Valley from Gamuda Bhd, he said the plan was still in place, but the government was seeking ways to complete the takeover without affecting its coffers too much.