

PM: I'm ready to step down

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Dr M to resign the minute PH presidential council asks for it

KUALALUMPUR: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is ready to step down as head of government at any moment that the Pakatan Harapan presidential council demands it.

"I think this will be decided by all four parties together - whether they want me to go or not.

"As far as I'm concerned, if they want me to go, I'll go now," Dr Mahathir told reporters after speaking at Bank Rakyat's Integrity Forum 2020 here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said this in response to several PKR MPs' proposal that he hand over the prime minister's post to PKR president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in May this year.

He had previously said that he would pass the baton to Anwar but not before the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) summit that Malaysia will host in November.

Pakatan had worked out the succession plan before the 14th General Election in May 2018, which saw Pakatan taking over as the ruling coalition.

On whether he had decided on the new Education Minister or on a Cabinet reshuffle, Dr Mahathir said a decision had yet to be made on both matters.

"I have not decided yet. I have been the acting Education Minister for just a short while.

"Reshuffling is not an easy task because it not only has to be accepted by me but also the four parties in the coalition," he said.

In response to Dr Mahathir expressing his willingness to relinquish his prime minister's post if asked to do so by the Pakatan presidential council, several leaders of the coalition's component parties said the council should have a thor-



Aiming for transparency: Dr Mahathir flanked by Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Redzuan Yusof (on his right) and Bank Rakyat chairman Datuk Noripah Kamsu (on his left) at the media conference after the Integrity Forum 2020.

ough discussion on such a scenario.

Selayang PKR MP William Leong said the council should deliberate soon on the leadership change.

"The Pakatan presidential council should call for an immediate meeting to set the handover date in May 2020.

"This will provide certainty and clear direction for the economy and political situation in the country," said Leong.

Some believe that Pakatan leaders should take seriously the message from Dr Mahathir.

PKR communications director Fahmi Fadzil said it was up to the Pakatan presidential council to discuss the matter in detail.

"This is a very important year. The economy has to be strength-

ened and issues related to the transition and the economy must be resolved with foresight and with complete understanding between all Pakatan parties," he said.

Meanwhile, PKR secretary-general Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said the council has the wisdom to deal with issues and matters relating to the handover of the prime minister's post, reports Bernama.

"What is important is the assurance that it (transition of power) will be orderly and smooth, and will not create any unrest.

"I think that is the priority and I believe in the wisdom of the Pakatan presidential council," he told reporters after opening the Prof Richard Whish Lecture Series organised by

the Malaysia Competition Commission yesterday.

However, Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia's vice-president Tan Sri Abdul Rashid Abdul Rahman said Dr Mahathir should be allowed to continue steering the country as he has "big programmes" ahead for the nation.

"Let him chart it out and finish some of these programmes. These are good programmes for the country, including the recovery of what we have lost in the past few years.

"There is no need for a change in the premiership for the time being.

"I prefer him to continue until the 15th General Election and then let another leader become the prime minister if Pakatan were to win again," he said.