

Harapan to announce PM candidate after Jan 7 convention

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Pakatan Harapan will announce its prime ministerial candidate after its Jan 7 national convention, said its chairperson Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

This is amidst speculation that jailed PKR *de facto* leader Anwar Ibrahim would not support his former rival Dr Mahathir Mohamad as the premier nominee.

At the press conference today after a three-hour Harapan presidential council meeting, Mahathir said the coalition will announce its candidate after the convention and before the coming general election.

"We cannot announce it after the general election, then it will be too late, must be before the election.

"(It will be announced) after the convention... (it) must be between the convention and the election," he said.

It was reported today by Singapore's *Straits Times* that PKR decided to follow Anwar's decision.

Mahathir, however, dismissed this as a mere speculation.

"You can use that as one of the rumours that you hear, but the truth will be known at the end of the convention," he said.

He added that other major issues will be announced during the convention, including decisions on seat allocations.

He also said the coalition was discussing its seat allocations and candidates based on the current electoral boundaries and new boundaries.

It is expected that 1,200 parties delegates will attend the convention at IDCC, Shah Alam.

When contacted, Amanah communications director Khalid Samad (*photo*) said Harapan will make the announcement on the PM candidate during the convention.

"Basically, everything will be clearer after the convention, there will be an announcement made.

"But whether we will announce the PM candidate on the convention, you have to wait and see.

"We have agreed that we have to name the candidate before the next general election," said the Shah Alam MP.

Meanwhile, Mahathir also agreed with Anwar's stand that royal assent is needed for passing government bills.

"(He wanted this) because several laws hadn't been assented by the Agong, and this touched the power of the rulers, thus we need to restore the power to the rulers," he said.

On Jan 2, Anwar had filed a legal challenge at the Federal Court against three laws that abrogate the mandatory requirement for bills to be assented to by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

Anwar is seeking to have the three laws, which were introduced between 1983 and 1994, be declared unconstitutional for affecting the basic structure of the Federal Constitution.

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