

Anwar reiterates no rush to be next PM

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By Massita Ahmad

SINGAPORE, Sept 15 (Bernama) – Malaysia’s Prime Minister- in-waiting Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has reiterated that was no rush for him to be the next prime minister as the country needs stability and a strong leader now.

Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) president elect and de facto leader of the governing Pakatan Harapan coalition in Malaysia said this to reporters when asked if he would prefer the succession plan to be sooner than later.

“The succession plan has been agreed that (Prime Minister) Tun (Dr) Mahathir (Mohamad) conducts the affairs of the state, and we support him. That is important.

“And I do not think we should be rushing into it as he is playing a very critical role for the country... I want to make sure that he is effective in his position,” he stressed.

Anwar was met after speaking at the S Rajaratnam Endowment Dialogue, a key programme of the Singapore Summit 2018 held at Shangri-La Hotel here.

On whether he is worried that UMNO has approached (Dr Mahathir’s party) Bersatu for an alliance, Anwar who has chosen the Port Dickson seat to pave the way for his political comeback, said that he did not worry.

“Why worry? They can approach any Pakatan coalition members. It is not a problem.”

He was responding to a news report saying that veteran newsman A Kadir Jasin had claimed word has been going around that Umno leaders, including its president Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, had met with Bersatu chairman Dr Mahathir to discuss an

UMNO-Bersatu merger.

"Apparently, they (Umno leaders) are no longer talking about Umno but about Pekembar...which is the short form of Umno's Malay name.

"Word is, they want to explore the possibility of combining Pekembar with Bersatu to form Pekembar Bersatu," wrote Kadir in his personal blog.

On whether he welcomed UMNO to join Pakatan, Anwar said : "Certainly not now. Certainly not now. Nor have we considered this. They (UMNO) were with PAS this morning at the PAS conference.

Asked if this could happen in the future, Anwar replied : ".. future case Que Sera Sera (whatever will be, will be). But for now, certainly not in the equation."

To a question whether his daughter Nurul Izzah or his wife, Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, who is also the current Deputy Prime Minister, should have Cabinet positions when he holds the premiership, Anwar said : "Our position is Wan Azizah has to step down when I assume office."

"This has been announced right at the beginning. And for Nurul Izzah, let's see what her position is. I don't know and won't speculate. But what is important now is Azizah will not serve in Cabinet. That is important," he added.

Nurul Izzah is the current Member of Parliament for Permatang Pauh.

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