

Ops Lalang: Ex-PM vague on opposition leaders he met
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Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamed today brushed aside the challenge by DAP chairperson Karpal Singh to reveal the identities of the opposition leaders the former met prior to Ops Lalang.

Mahathir defended his version of events, saying that he did in fact meet with some opposition politicians prior to the infamous police sweep that eventually lead to the ISA detention of several top leaders, including DAP's Lim Kit Siang.

He however pointed out that he could "not remember the faces" of those who were present at the meeting, which has now become the topic of dispute between him and the top two DAP leaders.

"This happened 20 years ago. I remember distinctly having the meeting. I don't really remember the faces of those who were there, but I am quite certain that Karpal Singh was not there and that Lim Kit Siang was there," he said at a press conference after launching the Palestinian Cultural Organisation Malaysia in Shah Alam.

"Karpal is a lawyer, that's how he deals (with cases) in court... he asks you to remember something 20 years ago," Mahathir said with his trademark sarcasm, pursing his lips in a mock serious expression.

The recent brouhaha surrounding Ops Lalang emerged after it was made known that Mahathir had blamed the police for the controversial operation in 1987, when over 100 dissidents were detained for up to two years under the ISA. The revelation was made in the book 'Doctor M: Operation Malaysia – **Conversations with Mahathir Mohamed**', **authored by veteran American journalist Tom Plate.**

'Mahathir is lying'

This led to heated denials from opposition leaders, the first being Lim who stressed that the meeting did not happen and that Mahathir was lying.

Mahathir responded to Lim's accusation, standing firm on his revelation of the disputed meeting and throwing the ball back in the opposition's court in asking them not to lie about it.

The former premier's version was also backed up by former inspector-general of police Haniff Omar, who said the police had acted on their own and that Mahathir did not order the mass detention of the dissidents.

In substantiating his claim that the meeting took place, Mahathir said the opposition leaders came to see him to appeal with him not to be arrested prior to the operation.

"It is embarrassing for me to have assured them that they would not be arrested and then they get arrested," he said

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