

**Mahathir 'trembles' at the thought of lawsuits**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**March 8, 2011**

Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad's 800-page memoirs which was launched today promises a series of startling revelations and eyebrow-raising explanations.

Among these are his excuses over the 1988 judicial crisis which saw the sacking of the former Lord President and five other judges ("Salleh Abas had complained of the noise from the King's renovation works") as well as former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim's sexual affairs.

However, Mahathir (left in picture) did not seem to be too concerned about threats of lawsuits.

In fact, with his trademark stoic sarcasm, he said that he 'trembles' at the thought of litigation during the question-and-answer session at his book launch this afternoon.

"That's why the launching was kept secret because of the fear that people might take an injunction to keep the book from being sold.

"Yes, there was that fear, and I was trembling. But if there is litigation, I will have to face it," he said to the delight of 300 people who had gathered in a shopping complex in Kuala Lumpur for the launch of *A Doctor In The House: The Memoirs of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad*.

Often portrayed with a soft smile - which incidentally is reflected on the front cover of his book - the 85-year-old looked obviously pleased with his autobiography, though appearing cool and not too overly-excited about it.

But the man was in a good mood, allowing about 15 questions from the floor, which counted the attendance of some top bosses from media organisations, bloggers and even his old friend, lawyer VK Lingam of 'correct, correct, correct' fame (front row, third from left).

When asked about how he decided on the book title, he joked that he actually had several other more flashy titles in mind before deciding.

"I was actually thinking of 'Mahathir the Napoleon', or 'Mahathir the Great', or 'Mahathir the Magnificent', you know, like (historical King Solomon known for his wisdom). But I thought that hyperbole may not be the right thing.

"Basically I'm a doctor and if I have to look at the health of the nation, that's what I am. I am always a doctor," he said.

**'Anwar is one challenging person'**

Despite the feel-good factor at the launch which was full of fanfare and in front of an adoring crowd, Mahathir reserved his harshest criticism for Anwar, his former deputy and protege who was ultimately sacked and imprisoned in 1998.

Though Mahathir could easily gloss over what can easily be said as one of the defining

moments in his 22-year tenure, he still reserved quite a bit of time at the book launch and chapters detailing his relationship with Anwar.

"Anwar was a challenging person. He challenged everyone including myself. When he joined Umno, in his first year itself, he said that he wanted to be the Youth chief...

"Then he went on the challenge (former deputy prime minister Ghafar Baba) but I said, 'No. You cannot challenge the deputy'...

"But after the deputy, what else is there to challenge?" asked Mahathir with a smile.

"I thought I had enough popularity to withstand the challenge, but Anwar had a lot of influence and material help to make sure that I lose. But anyway, I was already ready to step down. And then he got into something that I didn't approve and then he got arrested so he couldn't challenge me.

"But he likes to challenge so that he can finally stay in that house with a big dome on the roof," he said, in clear reference to the domed buildings of Putrajaya.

### **Eight years for an autobiography**

Unlike his Western counterparts who sprang into the memoir-writing business almost immediately, Mahathir took the scenic route to writing his autobiography, comparatively.

With the book released a good eight years after he left office in 2003, Mahathir (or more affectionately known as the ubiquitous Dr M) said that it was because of his copious amounts of drafts that held the book back.

"If you were my staff, you'd know. I'd almost always discard the first draft, together with the second, third and fourth. Then maybe I'll use the fifth draft. And I write in longhand most of the time...

"Although they are my memoirs, if people think that I am praising myself too much, they'll get fed up. So I try not to be boastful (in the book). But you know me, I'm a great boaster," he said.