

Pak Lah's 'Awakening' explains his Zzzzzzzz

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Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who was often criticised for his penchant for forty winks, has explained the reason for him dozing off on the job.

240209 abdullah badawiIn an interview contained in a new book, aptly termed *Awakening*, the Abdullah years in Malaysia, the former premier reveals that he had been suffering from a medical condition known as sleep apnea.

Abdullah, who succeeded Dr Mahathir Mohamad in 2003, said he sought medical help when his late wife Endon Mahmood and his colleagues pointed out his snoozing spells.

"My late wife, staffers and close associates pointed out to me that I had a tendency to doze off.

"I then consulted a good friend of mine, Dr Balvinder of Putrajaya Hospital who then suggested they do a sleep study on me," he adds in his book.

Abdullah also explains sleep apnea to be a dangerous condition, as people suffering from the illness could doze off while driving.

"The doctors warned me to take this seriously. I then went to Australia (in 2007) for a surgery to remove the polyps in my nose that was causing me to have breathing difficulties," he says.

'Dr M knew'

Abdullah's frequent slumber episodes had become the butt of jokes of his political rivals, both within and outside of BN. Photographs of him napping during official functions were also circulated online.

NONEDuring a protest outside the prime minister's official residence in 2008, a group of activists had even presented him with a pillow, stating that the nation was headed for peril while Abdullah continued sleeping.

Apart from the opposition, Mahathir had also used this to discredit his handpicked successor.

Commenting on this in his book, Abdullah writes: "I did tell Mahathir of my condition so for him to say I doze off because I am not interested in the job is most unkind."

"He knew the problem and yet he chose to say all these things," he adds.

Mahathir had played a pivotal role in arm twisting Abdullah to relinquish his post following the BN's 2008 electoral debacle.

During his five-year term, Mahathir had launched a series of vitriolic salvos against Abdullah and the latter's son-in-law Khairy Jamaluddin.

Abdullah's book will hit the stands later this month and the former prime minister is scheduled to be present at the launch.

The book contains a series of articles about Abdullah and is edited by scholars Bridget Welsh and James Chin. The book is published by Strategic Information and Research Development Centre.

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