

Dr M holds his tongue on Pak Lah, for now

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By Kow Kwan Yee

Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad has declined to respond to Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's criticism against the former in a new book.

"I'm studying his book. I'll make some references to it along the way," said Mahathir, when mobbed by reporters at Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's Aidilfitri open house function today.

Asked if he had read the book, Mahathir said: "I have not read the book, but I've read (reports about it through) malaysiakini.com".

In the new book 'Awakening: The Abdullah Badawi Years in Malaysia', Abdullah told the book's editors that Mahathir meddled with his administration and dubbed him a "man of contradictions".

Abdullah said that Mahathir had attacked the former for stopping a string of "megaprojects", such as the RM14.5 billion double-tracking project.

He argued that such projects needed to be reversed because of the huge budget deficit, warning that endeavours without fiscal prudence would bankrupt the country.

'Let Kuan Yew speak'

On former Singapore prime minister Lee Kuan Yew's comments that the talent outflow in Malaysia was due to its race-based policies, Mahathir said Lee was entitled to his opinion.

"He lives in free world like Singapore, he has the freedom to talk about anything," he said, with his trademark ascerbic sarcasm.

Asked if Lee should apologise over the remark, Mahathir said: "He is 90 years old now. Let us give allowance for the aged. I'm 88 years old now, I expect people to give me allowance too".

In excerpts from Lee's newly-launched book titled 'One Man's View of the World' at the Istana in Singapore on Wednesday, Lee said: "It is voluntarily shrinking the talent pool needed to build the kind of society that makes use of talent from all

racess."

Lee said that in the last 10 years, since the enactment of the New Economic Policy, the proportion of Malaysian Chinese and Indians of the total population has fallen dramatically.

"The Chinese made up 35.6 percent of the population in 1970. They were down to 24.6 percent at the last census in 2010. Over that same period, the Indian numbers fell from 10.8 percent to 7.3 percent," he said, adding that 40 percent of Singapore's migrants are from Malaysia.

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