

**Khair Toyo thinks very little of Pak Lah**  
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There was a time when former Selangor menteri besar Dr Mohd Khir Toyo would sing praises about Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the country's fifth prime minister, but not anymore.

In fact, when he was interviewed for a new book, titled 'Awakening: The Abdullah Badawi Years in Malaysia', Khir could only muster a few positive words about Abdullah.

NONEIt took interviewers, scholars Bridget Welsh and James Chin, three similar questions on good policies introduced by Abdullah before Khir could finally produce an answer, which wasn't really much.

"Only about transparency," was Khir's curt reply.

Chin followed it up by asking if Abdullah actually practiced transparency, to which Khir replied: "I do not know about that".

Before this, Khir made fleeting mentions of Abdullah having more "open" policies, agricultural policies and launching many "economic corridors".

On the most significant things about Abdullah's leadership as prime minister, Khir replied: "Frankly, in leadership, I see nothing".

Khir was appointed menteri besar in 2000 and held the post until 2008 when Pakatan Rakyat was voted in as the new state government in the historic general election.

Following this, Khir called for Abdullah to step down as prime minister and challenged his son-in-law Khairy Jamaluddin for the Umno Youth chief position later that year. However, Khairy eventually won.

Under Dr M's shadow

On Umno, Khir said Abdullah failed to bring any form of change to the party.

"I do not think he did it. Nothing. It (Umno) was like before," he said.

Khir said Abdullah's Achilles' Heel was the fact that he was constantly under his

predecessor Dr Mahathir Mohamad's shadow.

For instance Khir said Abdullah, more commonly known as Pak Lah, had tried to stamp his own mark by abandoning some of Mahathir's policies, such as the latter's penchant for megaprojects.

"People regard (Mahathir) as the best prime minister in Malaysia so far, carrying development and modernising the country. With that kind of things, anybody who came after Mahathir would (find it to) be quite difficult.

"Mahathir's shadow is still there, everywhere. I think Pak Lah has tried to make a change, but it is difficult," he said.

The book is a collection of articles about the Abdullah administration, edited by Welsh and Chin. It is published by Strategic Information and Research Development Center (SIRD) and will hit the stands later this month.

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