

Dr M: If Pak Lah so good, why the disastrous GE12?

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Fifth prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's claim that he was more financially prudent than his predecessor Dr Mahathir Mohamad did not do him any favours in the 12th general election, said the latter.

Instead, said Mahathir in a bitter blog posting, the mountains of savings were not appreciated by the populace who instead buried Abdullah by voting against the BN in five states.

awakening the abdullah badawi years in malaysia book "It must have been a very rich government which went for the 12th general election. Sadly the people did not appreciate the billions that were saved.

"They rejected the government party, giving five states and one federal territory to the opposition, and just a small majority to the thrifty party," he wrote sarcastically.

He was responding to Abdullah's comments in the book 'Awakening, the Abdullah Badawi Years in Malaysia'.

In the published interview with the editors of the book, Abdullah said, "Can you imagine if I had succumbed to Mahathir's continued pressure to spend when the deficit was already so high, how would Malaysia have weathered the oil and financial crisis which subsequently came up in 2008.

"If we had not been prudent then, and continued to spend, I can tell you we would be bankrupt by now."

"Just imagine how many billions more would be saved if I had stepped down earlier before building the North-South Highway, Penang Bridge, KLIA, West Port, Putrajaya, Cyberjaya, the twin towers of Petronas and a host of other mega projects. We would be sitting on a mountain of ringgits."

Mahathir's tit for tat

Mahathir in turn attacked Abdullah's cost savings as having resulted in more spending in his own point of view.

"The bridge would have cost just under 1 billion ringgit. The cancellation cost the government 200 million ringgit in compensation and unfinished work," he said of the cancelled 'crooked bridge' Singapore link.

crooked scenic bridge 110406 samy vellu looking at model"A contract was given to a foreign company to build the track from Seremban to Gemas.

"I don't know what it cost. Looks like the 14 billion saved was spent on very much shorter tracks, about one-third in length," said Mahathir.

Going further, he slammed his predecessor's move to replace the prime minister's jet that he had used with a larger one "bought not through the usual channels but by some private individual".

"There was denial by the government that the A320 was bought for the use by the prime minister. But the aircraft is even today used by the prime minister.

"Wonder why the deal was struck. Who really owns the aircraft? How much money has been saved by the government from this deal?" said the long-time premier.

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