

## **Najib is nowhere near his father, says ex-PM**

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**By Alyaa Azhar**

Dr Mahathir Mohamad today refused to be drawn into comparing his successor Abdullah Ahmad Badawi with the present prime minister Najib Abdul Razak.

Instead, Mahathir drew comparisons between Najib and the late Abdul Razak Hussein, the second prime minister of Malaysia.

"I don't make comparisons between Najib and Abdullah," said Mahathir, when posed with a question during a dinner organised by the Foreign Correspondents' Club Malaysia (FCCM) in Kuala Lumpur.

"Well, Najib is not anywhere near his father. His father was a great man.

"Abdullah has practically no idea. He falls asleep, it's not his fault; it's a (medical condition)."

Mahathir said Abdullah's tendency to fall asleep made him a bad candidate for premiership.

"But Najib has done something gravely wrong, which is why I had to come out and say my piece," he said.

Najib is Abdul Razak's eldest son.

### **Worked hard for Najib**

Mahathir said he had "worked hard" to pave the path for Najib's ascension as prime minister, to an extent that he wrote letters to Abdullah and told him to make Najib his deputy.

"I worked very hard and I had expected that when Najib took over, he would perform like his father at least, because his father was a great man.

"But I found he was doing funny things, like asking Singapore's permission to build the (crooked) bridge.

"It's not so much about building the bridge, but why do we have to ask Singapore when we are building it in our waters?" he said.

Mahathir added that although Najib did many questionable things, he had, at first, held back from voicing out to give the prime minister room.

"But then came 1MDB. I studied this thing very carefully. I asked him, what is this 1MDB?"

His answer was not satisfactory."

On Najib's explanation that 1MDB bought power plants so that they could be sold when the price goes up, Mahathir stressed that the government was not in the business of buying and selling companies, but rather, its business is to collect taxes.

### **Is RM42b with Jho High?**

The longest-serving prime minister also said that he simply could not accept that Putrajaya is having trouble accounting for the RM42 billion 1MDB owed to creditors

"This I cannot accept, I cannot accept the prime minister setting up a company which borrowed money with government guarantee and then cannot explain where the money has gone.

"Of course, many people tell me it is with 'Jho High or Jho Low'. But it is wrong," said Mahathir, triggering laughter from his audience.

Although Jho Low's (photo) name is often linked to the 1MDB controversy, he has claimed that he was made the scapegoat for the company's mismanagement.

Apart from Mahathir, Putrajaya's handling of 1MDB has also come under scrutiny of cabinet members.

During the last cabinet meeting, Najib told his cabinet colleagues who were not comfortable in his handling of the matter to resign.

### **Clever bookkeepers**

Meanwhile, Mahathir believes that the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) would have more luck than the Auditor-General in tracing the billions allegedly lost by 1MDB.

"I would place my faith in the PAC more than the Auditor-General. Auditors just inspect books, they don't do forensic auditing.

"They don't try to poke and find out where was the money spent, how was it spent, where did you lose this money.

"They merely check on the books so they will not discover much, people who are doing the books may be very clever," he said.

He also urged PAC to exercise its full authority and seek Najib's explanation on where 1MDB's money went.

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