

Shabery Cheek shoots down Najib-Dr M debate

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak need not debate with his predecessor, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, on television, Communication and Multimedia Minister Ahmad Shabery Cheek says.

During Mahathir's era, he didn't hold any debate, despite being criticised by former prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra then, Shabery said.

"A public debate is not (our) tradition," he said asked about the call, made by Perkasa chief Ibrahim Ali, during a press conference Shabery held at the Parliament lobby today.

"There's no need to go public if we have different opinions with our father," he said, adding that there was a better way to solve the difference.

Ibrahim made the call for a televised public debate between Najib and Mahathir following Najib's failure to turn up at a planned dialogue with NGOs, dubbed 'Nothing to Hide', last Friday.

The Umno supreme council member also went on to deny that Najib chickened out from the dialogue with the NGOs on the 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) fiasco.

Instead, Shabery said, the 'don't come' advice given to the prime minister by the police should be respected.

Supports 1MDB

On the 1MDB issue, Shabery said the cabinet has decided there would be no bailouts or the using of public funds to repay 1MDB's RM42 billion worth of loans.

"The cabinet also want the truth on issues relating to 1MDB," he said.

"It's not only me and my colleagues in the cabinet that share the same feeling, but the prime minister also doesn't want this to be seen as something hidden," he said.

When asked why the cabinet had approved a RM950 million standby credit for 1MDB, he said the funds 'will be paid back to the public' without elaborating.

He also clarified that the premier's call for ministers who didn't agree with him on the 1MDB issue to resign two weeks ago did not include him.

Shabery is viewed as objecting the way the 1MDB issue is being handled as he was reported to have appeared at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport to welcome home Deputy

Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin last Tuesday and had also left early during the cabinet meeting last Friday in the midst of a discussion on 1MDB.

"I just flew back from Singapore, after a meeting with ICT ministers from Asean," he said, explaining why he was seen at the airport.

Rail link terminal

Expressing his support for 1MDB, the Kemaman MP then cited Jurong East, where property values have ballooned following Singapore's decision locate the terminal of the high speed rail (HSR) link between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur there.

"Not many know that the Kuala Lumpur terminal will be located at 1MDB's Bandar Malaysia (photo)," he said.

"If the development in Jurong East wasn't made an issue, then why is 1MDB's development here an issue?" he asked.

"If this is built by 1MDB, then I need to support it," he said.

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