

Dr M says sorry for his choice of successors
MalaysiaKini.com
Aug 19, 2015

Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad today apologised for his choice of successors who did not turn out as he had hoped.

"How did I know when I chose? I am sorry and apologise to all," he was quoted as saying by The Malaysian Insider.

The former premier said this when giving a public lecture at Universiti Teknologi Petronas in Perak, where he was reportedly asked whether he had considered his successors' leadership potential before passing on the mantle.

Mahathir appeared to be referring to former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and current prime minister Najib Abdul Razak (photo) in his response.

"We can only guess, when someone is known as 'Mr Clean', we choose lah, but once he entered the arena, he became dirty.

"So I tried to find a cleaner replacement, who knew, this new guy's idea (would be) 'cash is king' and if you give people money, they will like you [...]"

"But in giving money to people, we must have money. If don't have, can do business, but not if we are holding a position (in government), but stealing, can," Mahathir was quoted as saying, without naming either Abdullah or Najib.

His remarks reportedly drew laughter and applause from the 4,000-odd audience, according to The Malaysian Insider.

Umno members prefer Muhyiddin

Another member of the audience asked Mahathir if Najib was following the precedent he had set by sacking his then deputy Anwar Ibrahim (photo).

Mahathir's response was reportedly that Najib's former deputy Muhyiddin Yassin's sacking was different, because it took place amid controversy over 1MDB's RM42 billion debt and RM2.6 billion deposited into Najib's personal bank account.

"As the deputy, Muhyiddin had to ask but then... as the deputy you must be careful.

"But I think Umno members prefer if Muhyiddin remained as the deputy prime minister.

"What wrong has he done? Didn't steal money, don't have RM2.6 billion," he was quoted as saying.

Muhyiddin was removed from the cabinet as deputy prime minister and education minister during last month's cabinet reshuffle.

Shortly after, a video of him in a conversation was leaked, showing him recounting his confrontation with Najib over the money that was deposited into his account.

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