

Pak Lah quizzed on marriage rumours
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Beh Lih Yi and Soon Li Tsin

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was today posed with an unexpected question, which had him blushing.

Amid fielding queries on the recent high-profile corruption scandals and dismal performance of the stock market, a journalist took him by surprise when he asked about the rumours of Abdullah having remarried.

Before dropping the question at a packed press conference in Kuala Lumpur, the journalist from an English daily first requested that Abdullah not get angry with what he was about to be asked.

"What he (the journalist) is going to ask will upset me, that is why he is telling me this," responded the premier with a smile.

The question was then popped: "There are many rumours on the Internet that you have remarried. Is this true?"

Abdullah and those present burst out laughing. The premier, who looked rather embarrassed by the question, replied: "These are just rumors, just rumours."

However, the journalist did not let up.

When he pressed the premier on the veracity of these rumours, Abdullah responded: "These are rumours, rumours-lah, rumours, rumours, okay?"

One last try

At this point, another journalist asked about the talks between Proton and Volkswagen and the premier was briefly distracted from the marriage issue.

After this, Abdullah's gaze fell on the earlier journalist and sensing that he was about to ask another question, the premier had everybody in stitches when he quipped:

"Apa pulak nak tanya lagi pasal kahwin ini?" (What more do you want to ask about the marriage?).

But this did not deter the journalist from trying his luck for one last time: "So these are just rumours?"

"Rumours, rumours, these are just rumours," Abdullah replied again.

Also present at the press conference were Bank Negara governor Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz, Second Finance Minister Nor Mohamed Yakcob and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Mohd Effendi Norwawi.

There have been long-standing rumours that Abdullah, whose wife Endon Mahmood passed

away on October 2005 following a protracted bout with cancer, has been bitten by the love bug again.

According to Internet postings, the 68-year-old premier is said to be romantically-linked to Jean Danker, the ex-wife of Endon's brother Osman.

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