

**Pak Lah can't manage finance: Dr M**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**Sept 18, 2008**  
**Chan Kok Leong**

The former prime minister marked another milestone in his astonishing career by publishing a book based on his blog CheDet.com.

Aptly named 'Blogging to Unblock' as Dr Mahathir Mohamad only started blogging after he claimed to be blacked out by mainstream media – the book (in English and Bahasa Malaysia) is entirely made up of his postings.

At 83, the former premier continued to display his wit and sharpness in the ensuing press conference in Putrajaya after the book launch.

Commenting on the portfolio swap between Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Najib Abdul Razak yesterday, Mahathir said that it was about time.

"I think it is an admission that he (Abdullah) cannot manage the Ministry of Finance. But actually there is nothing there because all the time it was being managed by (Finance Minister II) Nor Mohamed Yakcop anyway.

"Only problem is there is a lot of interference with Nor Mohamed (that's what I learnt). He, himself (Abdullah) played no role at all in the management of the finances of the country," said Mahathir.

"He has put Najib there but we are going to face a very critical stage in our economy because of what is happening in the United States, especially the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers and the US\$85 billion bailout of (insurance giant) AIG."

mahathir chedet blog website event 180908 02He warned that if Najib does not manage the economy well, the deputy premier will be blamed for it.

On whether the swap will relieve some pressure off Abdullah within Umno, Mahathir replied with his trademark sarcasm.

"I don't think he feels any pressure at all," said the former prime minister.

"Even when he lost the election or Permatang Pauh, he said it was nothing. I think his blood pressure must be very low. The whole country may feel the tension but he doesn't," added the doctor by training.

### **Recent arrests unjustified**

Being a popular blogger now, Mahathir was also asked to comment on the recent arrests of bloggers.

"I think it is not justified. When people were arrested under ISA in 1987, there was tension in the country.

"There was this incident where a soldier shot somebody and Chinese were leaving the country. In order to restore law and order, the police had to take action.

"But this time, if you say that there is tension or security risk in this country because of the writing of a blogger ... I don't think it's true at all," said Mahathir.

mahathir chedet blog website event 180908 01"Even if Teresa Kok was involved in a move to stop the azan, that can be remedied by explaining that this is not a subject she should be discussing about."

Mahathir said that there is no security risk in the country at present and he argued that should the need arise however, arrests can then be made.

"As far as bloggers are concerned, if they attack the government that is not subversion. If it (subversion) is defined as attacking the government, then Harakah (PAS paper) should be placed under detention, including some of the PAS leaders.

Despite his many clashes with Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim, the former premier was against any ISA arrest for his former deputy.

"I think there is a (court) case against him. Wait until the case is heard instead of detaining him under ISA."

On him rejoining Umno, the elder statesman said that he wants to wait and choose his own time to return to the party he re-founded in 1988.

He added that there were many who are trying to persuade him to rejoin, saying that he can still contribute to the party.

"But I haven't made any application yet and I will choose the right time to rejoin," said Mahathir with his trademark grin.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.  
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/90010>