

Form royal probe on Dr M's 'squandering'
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak should set up a royal commission of inquiry to determine if his mentor Dr Mahathir Mohamad had 'burned' RM100 billion on grandiose projects and corruption during his 22-year reign.

In making this call, DAP stalwart Lim Kit Siang termed it as an issue of pressing national interest and importance.

Furthermore, he said the move will also reflect on Najib's commitment to 'combating corruption' in his Government Transformation Programme (GTP).

"Will any cabinet minister dare step forward to support such a royal commission of inquiry?" he asked in a statement.

The veteran politician was commenting on the book penned by former *Asian Wall Street Journal* managing editor Barry Wain, entitled 'Malaysian Maverick: Mahathir Mohamad in Turbulent Times'.

Lim said Mahathir should declare whether he would co-operate with such a commission of inquiry to prove that Wain is wrong in blaming him for the legacy of "wasting or burning up" RM100 billion in his long tenure as the fourth prime minister, which works up to an average of RM5 billion a year.

Will the book be banned?

The opposition veteran also asked why the government has been holding up 800 copies of the book for more than three weeks.

"There can be no doubt that Mahathir and Najib would have already read the biography. "Is either of them objecting to the release of the biography and want it banned like Mahathir's 'Malay Dilemma' when it was first published in 1970? This would be the irony of ironies," he said.

Lim noted that in this Internet era, which is very different from four decades ago in 1970, any ban or censorship of Wain's new biography will make it even more popular among Malaysians.

He also pressed Mahathir to reveal his thoughts on the matter.

"What is Mahathir's stand on whether Wain's new biography on him should be released to the Malaysian public without any more obstacles from the authorities in Malaysia?"

"If Mahathir thinks that he has been defamed or maligned by Wain in the new biography, he should avail himself of the legal process to clear his name and reputation and not to support any ban or censorship of the book."

In his book, Wain wrote that the Mahathir administration, which took office in 1981 with the slogan, 'clean, efficient, trustworthy', was almost immediately embroiled in financial scandals that "exploded with startling regularity".

By the early 1990s, he said, cynics remarked that it had been "a good decade for bad

behaviour, or a bad decade for good behaviour".

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