

Dr M slams Pak Lah

... but BN leaders rally behind the PM

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PUTRAJAYA: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad levelled his strongest criticism yet against Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, accusing the Prime Minister of dismantling many of his policies and projects.

The former Prime Minister, who retired in 2003, said Abdullah had not been his first choice as successor but second after current Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Dr Mahathir said he was hurt by allegations that he "finished all the Government's money, and that the Government was bankrupt" because of mega-infrastructure projects that marked his 22 years in power.

Dr Mahathir said Najib received the highest votes but he decided to choose Abdullah anyway. However, Dr Mahathir did not elaborate.

He said this at a press conference with local and foreign journalists, which lasted more than an hour, at the Perdana Leadership Foundation yesterday. The media was invited there to cover a briefing on the upcoming Perdana Global Peace Forum to be held in Kuala Lumpur later this month.

The former Prime Minister said the Government was "out of my control", and he did not know if things would be any different if he had picked someone else as successor.

"I expect a reasonable degree of gratefulness, but instead I was told that I have indulged in mega projects and finished the country's money," he said, adding that he had made many mistakes in his life, such as helping many people only to have them stab him in the back.

Asked if Abdullah had stabbed him in the back, Dr Mahathir replied: "Minor bruises."

He added: "I have a habit of choosing the wrong people, perhaps."

>TURN TO PACE 3

> Najib stands
by Pak Lah N3

> Cabinet
defends PM N4

