

Prime Minister to give detailed reply

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Prime Minister will provide a lengthy and detailed reply to all issues raised by Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad at their four-eyed meeting on Sunday.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said that Abdullah called an emergency meeting with the Umno management committee.

"He briefed us on the meeting. We have taken note of the issues raised and we are prepared to give a detailed reply.

"Tun did not give the Prime Minister much time to speak during the meeting. Tun's questions wore lengthy and there were too many issues. It will take time to prepare the answers."

On Sunday, the two leaders met at the official residence of the Prime Minister where Dr Mahathir aired his grouses for about one-and-a-half hours.

Soon after the meeting, Dr Mahathir said that although he was satisfied that the meeting took place, he was not happy with the response he got from Abdullah.

At a Press conference on Monday, Dr Mahathir repeated his criticisms of Abdullah.

"I spoke to the Prime Minister after the four-eyed meeting and he told me that he wants to prepare a detailed arid lengthy reply on all the issues raised by Tun. He is prepared to give complete answers," said Najib.

When reminded that most of the issues

raised by Dr Mahathir had been asked by him before and had been answered, Najib said the former Prime Minister wanted detailed explanations for some of the issues.

Najib was, however, not sure if the reply would be during another face-to-face meeting or in writing. "It is up to the Prime Minister," he said.

Najib was speaking to reporters after receiving more than 180,000 visitors to

the Hari Raya open house hosted by the Muslim ministers at the Putra World Trade Centre on Tuesday.

Asked to respond on Dr Mahathir's move to give a statement immediately after the meeting, Najib said he was "shocked" by Dr Mahathir's move. "We were taken aback by Tun's immediate response.

"I was under the impression that it was a private four-eyed meeting. Umno

members and I hoped that the meeting would be the beginning of efforts to mend relationship between the two personalities. We thought something positive would come out of it for the sake of the nation and the party.

"I was surprised with the development. Like most people, I too, thought it (the meeting) could be a beginning of working things out between the Prime Minister and Tun.

"Tun has come out with such strong criticism after the meeting. We had hoped for better things to happen between the two for the sake of the party and nation but it is not working out the way we expected."

Asked when the reply would be sent to Dr Mahathir, Najib said it would be decided after the Hari Raya celebrations.

The PM, when approached for comments on the meeting with the former prime minister, refused to say anything. "This is not the right day to comment on the issue."

When asked if there were any specific topics the people who visited him at the Hari Raya open house had asked, he said the people told him that he was doing a fine job as the Prime Minister and had asked him to continue. They said "We will support you!", he said.

Pressed further to comment on the meeting, Abdullah, who was in a jovial mood, said: "No. I am not talking on that subject. There will be a time for that. Now you all (reporters) stop working and go and enjoy the food."