

Criticism worse than Lee's

JOHOR BARU: Entrepreneurial and Co-operative Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin described former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's criticism of the Government as worse than that by Singapore Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew.

He said that Dr Mahathir upon his retirement could have opted to emulate Lee's example by remaining in the Gov-

ernment to ensure that the policies implemented under his administration were unchanged, but he chose not to do so.

"If Dr Mahathir had wanted what he had been doing to be continued, he could have done what Lee Kuan Yew did, but he himself said that he wanted to retire and that he had been in politics for too long," he said yesterday when asked why Prime Minister Datuk Seri

Abdullah Ahmad Badawi did not use his powers to appoint Dr Mahathir as a senior minister or a minister mentor.

Khaled, who is a member of the Umno Supreme Council, was speaking to reporters at his Hari Raya open house held at the Taman Johor Jaya multi-purpose hall near here.

He said Dr Mahathir's allegation that Abdullah was a weak leader had revealed that

the former prime minister actually wanted Abdullah to be his proxy.

Khaled said a minister mentor would have to shoulder the responsibility of contributing to and implementing all government decisions, but what Dr Mahathir wanted was only a proxy.

"I am not amazed at the criticism from Dr Mahathir and I hope the people will also not

be swayed. In the 22 years that Dr Mahathir was prime minister, several of his deputy prime ministers had disagreed with him and many of the decisions were made on his own," he added.

"Dr Mahathir had assumed Pak Lah (Abdullah) to be weak and, therefore, picked Pak Lah (as his successor) so Pak Lah could be his proxy; that is worse than him (Dr Mahathir) being a

minister mentor," he said.

Khaled said that unlike Dr Mahathir, Abdullah arrived at decisions after holding meetings and taking into account the views of all quarters.

"In several matters, such as the cancellation of the bridge project to link Malaysia and Singapore and the railway double-track projects, the decisions were made by the Cabinet." - Bernama