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Reluctant Politician author looks at M'sia under Pak Lah

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KUALA LUMPUR: The author of the *Reluctant Politician: Tun Dr Ismail and His Time* biography Dr Ooi Kee Beng has returned with his second compilation of opinions in his new book, *Lost in Transition: Malaysia Under Abdullah*.

The book was launched yesterday by Penang Deputy Chief Minister Prof Dr P. Ramasamy, who represented DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang.

Ooi, who is coordinator of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies' (ISEAS) Malaysia Study programme, said the book was compiled at the end of last year.

"The book was written over the last two years of (Datuk Seri) Abdullah's (Ahmad Badawi) first term and it is more interesting (than the first book) as I suppose things get more interesting when things are wrong.

"But if we put both books together, academically, we will be able to chart a lot of events that took place over the last two year's of Abdullah's leadership," Ooi said, adding that he was looking forward

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to making the third compilation, especially with the emergence of *Makkal Sakti* in the country that took the 12th general election by storm.

The book launch, which also featured a panel discussion with Ooi, Centre for Policy Initiative CEO Dr Lim Teck Ghee and *Malaysiakini* editor-in-chief Steven Gan at the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall, explored the results of the March 8 polls, extensively looking into reasons behind Barisan Nasional's poor performance, the Umno dominance in the coalition and the influence of the ICT sector.

The speakers, moderated by PKR Youth executive committee member Faisal Mustaffa, engaged the crowd of some 100 people in their talks on the challenges before Abdullah's leadership, whether Abdullah had indeed been given a second chance and the need to eradicate the race-based party component factor.

Ooi's book, published by the Strategic Information and Research Development Centre (SIRD), is available at Popular bookstores, at the SIRD in Petaling Jaya or at www.gerakbudaya.com