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Being Abdullah Ahmad Badawi: The Authorised Biography

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The book traces the evolving public perception of Abdullah throughout his 5-year tenure as premier

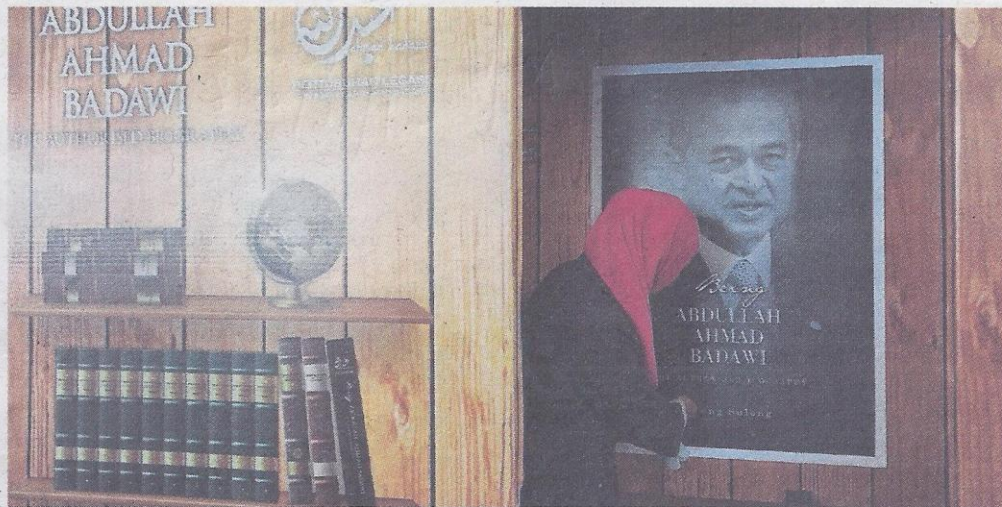
by NG MIN SHEN

IT IS common and sometimes even a tradition for leaders of nations to write their own memoirs, or have such books written about them. Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the fifth prime minister of Malaysia, is no exception.

A biography titled "Being Abdullah Ahmad Badawi: The Authorised Biography", was officially launched in Kuala Lumpur yesterday by the Sultan of Perak, Sultan Dr Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah.

Written by journalist and author Wong Sulong, the book traces the evolving public perception of Abdullah throughout his five-year tenure as premier.

According to Sultan Nazrin, the book "lays out the Badawi years, in particular his policies



A fan admiring the poster of the biography on Abdullah

Pic by Muhd Amin Naharui

and programmes, his trials and tribulations, during the five and a half years that he led the country".

In his speech at the launch ceremony, Sultan Nazrin lauded Abdullah as a man and leader of integrity.

"A nation's survival and its success depends on integrity at all levels and most crucially at its leadership, and that is what Abdullah sought to achieve

when he came to office. The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionable integrity. Without it, no real success is possible," he said.

Abdullah succeeded Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad as Prime Minister of Malaysia in 2003 when the latter resigned after over 22 years at the helm. He stepped down in 2009, now remembered as a leader who always remained calm, unruf-

fled and deeply religious, and was succeeded by current Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak.

"In modern society where cynicism abounds, the most difficult thing you will find as you read this book, is how Abdullah sought to instil integrity within the system. We will continue to do well as long as there are more people of integrity among us than those

without," Sultan Nazrin said.

The Perak ruler also noted the pressure faced by Abdullah to resign after his party lost the two-thirds majority in the 2008 general election. At the time, the fifth prime minister had to choose whether to stay and fight or to step down and make way for a successor.

"His reasons for resigning were simple. He could face off his challenges with a bitter fight and probably win through the power of his incumbents, but had he done that, he would have inherited, had he won, or left behind, had he lost, a fractured and divided party. Therefore he chose to resign," Sultan Nazrin said.

He added that "a leader of integrity does the right thing, at the right time, and for all the right reasons", and there was much to be learned from the book which could be applied to leadership at all levels.

"Being Abdullah Ahmad Badawi: The Authorised Biography" will soon be available at all major bookstores with a retail price of RM100.