

**Kit Siang wants full audit of financial scandal losses**  
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**By Yow Hong Chieh**

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 24 — Putrajaya must begin a full audit on the billions in losses it incurred from financial scandals during former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's tenure, Lim Kit Siang said today.

The DAP parliamentary leader said such scrutiny was needed as Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak does not appear to have learned lessons from the scandals that occurred during Dr Mahathir's 22-year rule, which he said cost the nation some RM100 billion.

He cited Putrajaya's move to settle out-of-court with former Malaysia Airlines System (MAS) chairman Tan Sri Tajudin Ramli as an example of how the federal bailouts of companies have not abated under Najib.

"Malaysians are entitled to know whether the tentacles of Mahathir's misgovernance in the MAS scandal have reached into the present Najib administration as to result in another bailout for Tajudin," he said in a statement.

Dr Mahathir's policies have come under scrutiny in recent weeks following the government's decision to settle out-of-court the RM589 million in debt owed by Tajudin Ramli from a loan he took in 1994 to buy flag carrier MAS.

The settlement sum was undisclosed, prompting intense public criticism and calls from lawmakers across the political divide for taxpayers to know how much of public funds had been recovered.

Dr Mahathir today also admitted that the 2001 bailout of MAS had led to a loss of public funds but defended the move as necessary to turn around the ailing flag carrier.

This was despite the government forking out more than twice the market value at a cost of RM1.8 billion when it paid RM8 per share to Tajudin instead of the market value of RM3.68.

Dr Mahathir also pointed out Putrajaya has, on many occasions, lost taxpayers' money and accused the media of being selective in focusing on the MAS-Tajudin Ramli saga.

"The government lost money when it cancelled the double-tracking and electrification between Ipoh and Padang Besar. We lost about RM8 billion," he said of the project that was shelved by his successor Tun Abdullah Badawi.

The rail project was eventually revived in 2007.

Lim added today he was "shocked and outraged" that Dr Mahathir had tried to justify the losses incurred from the MAS bailout by pointing out that more money had been lost when the double-tracking project was cancelled.

"This is the classic perverse Mahathirish illogic that could righteously argue that so long as there is a greater financial scandal in later administrations ... there is no need for him to

feel remorse, guilt or responsibility for the colossal loss of public funds," the Ipoh Timur MP said.

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