

**Mahathir crying over spilt milk, says Pua**  
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**by T.K. Letchumy Tamboo**

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad should be the last person to criticise the sale of Maju Expressway (MEX) by concessionaire owner Tan Sri Abu Sahid Mohamed for a huge profit, says Petaling Jaya Utara MP Tony Pua.

He said Dr Mahathir's criticism "brims with hypocrisy and false righteousness" when it was he who awarded the concession to Abu Sahid.

"According to Dr Mahathir, the MEX sale appears to be an exercise of making money from government assistance and Abu Sahid should explain himself to the public," Pua said in a statement.

"He had said that 'you sell what is yours, you don't sell what belong to others' as it could be as bad as selling approved permits (APs).

"Dr Mahathir's argument is twisted and illogical on the simple basis that it was he who had awarded this lopsided concession agreement to Abu Sahid in 1997 and subsequently revised the agreement and terms of concession in 2003 prior to his retirement."

Abu Sahid, who owns 96.8 per cent of the highway, invested RM60 million in the project but with the proposed sale to EP Manufacturing Bhd (EPMB), would make a net profit of RM1.09 billion.

"That works out to more than an astronomical 1,800 per cent return on investment in less than eight years since construction began in 2004 for MEX," Pua said.

"The rape of Malaysian taxpayers which made Abu Sahid a billionaire by this exercise alone is outrageous and unacceptable because out of his profit, RM976.7 million was paid for by taxpayers.

"The grant hence constitutes 74 per cent of the total cost of construction for the RM1.32 billion highway.

"Dr Mahathir did not offer a government loan of RM976.7 million to Abu Sahid which will require repayment. He had instead given MEX a grant of the same amount which does not require any repayment."

Pua said Abu Sahid would make more than what he invested whether he sold MEX or kept it for the remaining concession period until 2037.

"Dr Mahathir is crying over spilt milk. If he is really sincere about not allowing the concessionaires to make such profits, he should support PR's position to expropriate MEX per the concession contract at only RM400 million to ensure that the people's welfare is protected," he said.

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