

Audit 'all Tuns', says Dr M
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By Shannon Teoh

PUTRAJAYA, Feb 29 — Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad invited the government today to make a full audit on "all Tuns" after DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang claimed taxpayers lost RM100 billion in financial scandals during the former's 22 years in charge.

Dr Mahathir's policies have been the subject of scrutiny in recent weeks, after the Najib administration decided to settle out-of-court the RM589 million debt owed by former Malaysia Airline System Bhd (MAS) chief Tan Sri Tajudin Ramli.

The former prime minister, who was in power from 1981 to 2003, told reporters today he would accept such an audit on his administration.

"But all Tuns must be audited. The sons and grandsons of Tuns as well," he said in an apparent reference to his successor Tun Abdullah Badawi.

Dr Mahathir has repeatedly criticised Abdullah since 2005, accusing the latter of nepotism by allowing Khairy Jamaluddin, Abdullah's son-in-law, to wield power in the prime minister's office and allowing corruption to get "to the point of no return."

Lim had last week called on Putrajaya to begin a full audit on the billions in losses it incurred from financial scandals during Dr Mahathir's tenure.

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 asserted cost the nation some RM100 billion.

He cited Putrajaya's move to settle out-of-court with Tajudin as an example of how the federal bailouts of companies have not abated under Najib.

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

Dr Mahathir has 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 RM1.8 billion when it paid more than twice the market value to buy out Tajudin, paying RM 8 per share instead of the RM3.68 they had been trading for.

But 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 Abdullah.

The rail project was eventually revived in 2007.

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