

Pak Lah says ties with Dr M 'cordial', mum on 'Mahathirism'
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By Nomy Nozwir

KUALA LUMPUR, July 10 — Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today said that his relationship with Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad remains cordial, despite the former premier saying yesterday that he had ended the latter's legacy of "Mahathirism".

Dr Mahathir said yesterday he had to quit Umno in 2008 because Abdullah had made the party and the government unrecognisable from his time as leader.

"Actually 'Mahathirism' died when Datuk Seri (now Tun) Abdullah took over from me in 2003. He changed Umno, the BN and the government so much that they no longer resemble the institutions I used to know. I had to resign from Umno," Dr Mahathir said in a posting on his blog yesterday.

Dr Mahathir was a strident critic of Abdullah, and left Umno in 2008. He rejoined the party when Datuk Seri Najib Razak took over as PM from Abdullah in 2009.

However, Abdullah said today that they remain on good terms although they would sometimes have differences in opinion.

"I am me. He is him (Masing-masinglah, saya adalah saya. Dia adalah dia)," said Abdullah, who was handpicked by Dr Mahathir to succeed him as prime minister and Umno president.

Dr Mahathir said yesterday the idea of "Mahathirism" was a figment of Lim Kit Siang's imagination, pointing out that his DAP rival's campaign against the revival of the ex-premier's brand of politics was an exercise in futility.

The DAP veteran had last week denied harbouring hatred for his long-time political rival, suggesting instead that he only disliked the influential leader's brand of politics.

In the escalating war of words between the political veterans, the DAP parliamentary leader alleged that Dr Mahathir has been working very hard to keep "Mahathirism" alive in the ruling Umno through corruption and cronyism.

Lim also disagreed that former prime minister Abdullah was voted out of power for mistreating his predecessor, Dr Mahathir, saying instead that Abdullah, or "Pak Lah", had lost in Election 2008 for failing to dismantle the "Mahathir legacy" of corruption, cronyism and abuses of power.

Abdullah said today he did not know about the "Mahathirism" that DAP's Lim referred to.

The Kepala Batas MP said that everyone had their own methods, saying that the question of him ending Mahathirism is not an issue and that achieving Vision 2020 would be more important.

"When I became prime minister, I have stated the aim that what we need to achieve is Vision 2020. I have never forgotten this.

"In the past, we placed priority on unity, because in that age, we had the communist insurgency. Then during peacetime, we built infrastructure; in my time, we built human capital. Without knowledge, there will not be innovation for (the) country's progress.

"I also see increased construction of schools, colleges and universities, so this is what I call developing human capital," he said in a press conference today.

When asked about Umno's chances in the coming elections, he was optimistic that the party now led by Najib would prevail.

"All parties want to win. We will see what happens. As an Umno member, I want Umno and Barisan Nasional to win."

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