

Pak Lah to publish own memoirs next year
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There will be an authorised biography of Tun Abdullah Badawi late next year. It will cover his family's early life in Malaya till his days as a former prime minister.

The Malaysian Insider understands that the book was commissioned this year and will include interviews with not only friends and family but also those who disagreed with his style of leadership. It is also likely to be sprinkled with anecdotes from his years as the prime minister.

Abdullah has been in the news recently with the release of a book edited by James Chin and Bridget Welsh on his one term as prime minister, titled "Awakening: The Abdullah Badawi Years in Malaysia".

One chapter in the book was devoted to an interview Abdullah gave to the co-editors and the questions touched on his prickly relationship with Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, his inability to meet the expectations of the voters who gave Barisan Nasional (BN) a huge mandate in 2004 and other areas.

The bulk of the 620-page book contained essays by Malaysian and foreign political pundits, academia and writers on their take on the Abdullah years between October 2003 and March 2009.

And many of them reflected on how Abdullah squandered a historic opportunity to reform Umno and Malaysia.

Clive Kessler, an Australia-based academic, noted that "for all his sincerity and decency, signalled in his signature call to his fellow citizens to 'work with him' and not 'for him', Abdullah Badawi's prime ministership was not a sunny time; it was overcast and clouded with shadows.

"Church burnings, mosque desecration, temple destructions, cow's head provocations, and the whipping of women under Syariah law for venial, not moral transgressions, would soon follow upon Abdullah Badawi's departure."

Former de facto law minister Datuk Zaid Ibrahim said it was difficult to describe Abdullah's leadership style.

"His desire to please makes him vulnerable to what many perceived to be his indecisiveness. He changed his mind on many occasions, which made some people poke fun at him as unreliable," said Zaid, who was appointed a senator and brought into the Cabinet by Abdullah after BN's poor performance in 2008.

He said that had Abdullah stayed true to his reform agenda as laid out in the 2004 election manifesto, the 2008 election would not have been a disaster.

"In fact, he would be touted as the great leader who transformed the country into a livable and viable democracy, " he noted. – August 8, 2013.

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