

Dr M-Pak Lah row a hot topic



Shaari: Said the two should have a heart-to-heart talk



Idris: 'He must have found it difficult to let go'



Nazri: 'He called me Brutus, now who is Brutus?'

BY ZULKIFLI ABD RAHMAN

WHEN MPs gathered for the start of the Dewan Rakyat meeting on Monday after a short hiatus, their number one topic of discussion was the latest spat between former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Just two days before, Dr Mahathir unleashed his latest salvo at a forum against Abdullah's administration.

The MPs, when met, felt that the bitter spat between Dr Mahathir and Abdullah should end - that the two men should meet and talk it out.

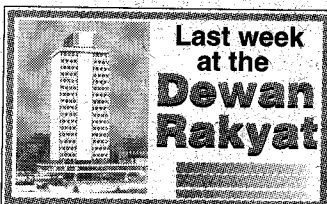
Shaari Hassan (BN - Tanah Merah) said it would be good for Abdullah and Dr Mahathir to meet and have a heart-to-heart talk on underlying issues that had raised the former premier's ire.

"Dr Mahathir should not have made his criticisms out in the open. He is a respected politician who has done a lot for the community and the people.

"If he want to tegur (criticise), he should have just called for a meeting, sit and talk to Pak Lah in a *musyawarah* (consultative) fashion.

"Abdullah is his friend and former deputy. To me, both have different approaches and since Abdullah is our leader now, we should let him do his job in peace," he said.

Tangga Batu MP, Datuk Idris



Harun said he believed that Dr Mahathir was suffering from the "post-prime ministerial syndrome".

Idris noted that when he himself left his job as a municipal council president to join politics, almost all his policies and programmes that he had outlined was replaced or terminated by his successor.

"I felt sad because I thought everything that I had carried out was for the good of the council.

"I didn't complain because my time was over. I had to move on. But I can empathise with Dr Mahathir because I think that he still felt responsible for the Government and the country. He must have found it difficult to let go when he had led the country for 22 years."

Just outside the Dewan, Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz held a press conference, hitting out at Dr Mahathir for his latest attack.

The Minister in the Prime Minister's Department explained that if he did not respond, the people might think that whatever the former premier had said was true.

He told reporters that he had joined politics after meeting Dr

Mahathir, who was then Education Minister, in London in 1975 when he (Nazri) was there studying law.

Nazri said: "I saw him as a man of principle, and I joined Umno after that. I have much respect for him.

"But now I'm disappointed because he had gone back on his word, collaborating with the Opposition and interfering with the Government when he had promised not to.

"He called me Brutus, now who is Brutus? We are not demonising him. He is demonising himself," Nazri added.

Some MPs described Nazri's press conference as "a personal outburst against his former boss who had groomed him".

Nazri, they said, had forgotten who had brought him up.

One MP, who preferred to remain anonymous, however, said Nazri had in fact been consistent in his political approaches.

He reminded all and sundry that Nazri had actually supported Dr Mahathir at the height of the clash between the former leader and his then deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in 1998.

"Although it was well known then that Nazri was close to Anwar, Nazri did not let that stop him from defending Dr Mahathir against his close friend," he said.

The Dewan sits again tomorrow.