

Decision to cancel 'scenic bridge' stays, says PM

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JOHOR BARU: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said yesterday the government will not reverse its decision to cancel the "scenic bridge" project to replace the Johor Causeway as demanded by former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said the cabinet had discussed the project in detail before deciding to cancel it.

"He (Mahathir) can say whatever he wants. I am the prime minister. I decide what is best for the people," he told reporters after launching MSC Malaysia Cyberport here.

On Sunday, Mahathir said he would refrain from commenting on Abdullah's administration if the government revived the bridge project.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz described Mahathir's remarks as a 'blackmail'.

"This is blackmailing. We can't reverse the decision just like that. Before we make whatever decision, we give much thought to it and take the interest of the people into consideration. How can we change the decision because of one person?" he told reporters after visiting the Amanah Raya Bhd branch in Kuala Terengganu yesterday.

Nazri said Mahathir's state-

ment was merely an excuse to continue criticising the government.

"Never mind, for me, he can go ahead. But, don't let other people tell us not to reply, like Umno Youth exco member Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir. I don't understand, he said don't raise the issues about his father at the Umno general assembly, but if his father continues to level the criticisms, we have to continue replying," he said.

"And we have replied everything. I don't understand what Mukhriz meant, I have to reply to four questions first ... We have made lengthy replies. Is he blind? Can't he read? Clarifications have been made. Is he deaf? What else does he want?" he said.

Nazri said the different views given by Umno leaders over the issue reflects a rift in Umno. He singled out Umno Supreme Council member and Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Abdul Aziz Shamsuddin for mistaking his statement.

"I didn't say that Tun Dr Mahathir wanted to wrest control (of) the power. I just said I had information that Tun wanted Pak Lah's downfall.

"How can Tun say that what he did will not split the party? If the ministers themselves made conflicting remarks, what does it mean?" - Bernama