

Dr M keeps up the attack

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KUALA LUMPUR: A day after meeting Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad renewed his criticism of the Prime Minister.

The former prime minister also said he was not satisfied with, or convinced by, Abdullah's responses to issues he had raised at their meeting on Sunday, which he had earlier described as a "worthwhile" discussion.

Dr Mahathir said the explanations he was dissatisfied with included those pertaining to his criticism of Abdullah's son-in-law Khairy Jamaluddin and his son Kamaluddin.

"He said he didn't think his children were involved. He said that Khairy was working with him before and sudden-

ly became his son-in-law. And he says he will ask them. That's all," he told a press conference at his residence in the Mines Resort City in Seri Kembangan yesterday.

Dr Mahathir alleged that Khairy and Kamaluddin had interfered in the award of projects.

He also questioned why Abdullah had allowed his wife, the late Datin Paduka Seri Endon Mahmood, to set up the charitable body Yayasan Budi Penyayang when Bakti (Association of Wives of Ministers and Deputy Ministers) had already been established.

In addition, he elaborated on issues he had raised at the meeting such as Approved Permits, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, Proton and the crooked bridge project.

The press conference was called because many pressmen had missed the one he had given on Sunday evening after meeting Abdullah.

Asked if his dissatisfaction with Abdullah's responses meant that Sunday's meeting had not achieved anything, he replied: "I have achieved the objective of telling him (my grievances) in quite substantial detail."

Dr Mahathir also told the media that he refuted talk that the Government had used up all its funds when he was prime minister.

"During my time, the profit made by Petronas was RM26bil. I know that subsequently, Petronas made RM58bil and last financial year, it made RM86bil, which is more than the total collection from income and corporate taxes, which will be around RM60bil

this year," he said.

The former prime minister said he told Abdullah that Chinese businessmen were unhappy with the country's economy and some had informed him that they would not vote for Barisan Nasional in the next general election.

He added that the public had been critical of the present economy and Umno could not win elections without public support.

Dr Mahathir also revealed to the press that he had a tape recorder with him during the two-hour meeting with Abdullah at Seri Perdana.

On whether he was concerned that his legacy would be chipped away due to the controversy between him and the Prime Minister, he said: "It is being chipped away by the actions of

the Government."

He also reiterated that he would continue to make criticism "in my usual way" and that he had the right to speak to Umno members.

When asked whether he would attend the Umno general assembly next month, Dr Mahathir said he had yet to decide on this.

"But I have not been given a slot to speak, so I don't know how I am going to speak," he added.

On what he wanted to achieve by his criticism of Abdullah, he said: "The Government has been criticised before, and a government which is sensitive would take into consideration criticisms.

"It may take the form of resignation; it may take other forms, like stopping all these wrong things."