

Dr M: Build the bridge and I'll stop commenting

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■ **By Hamidah Atan**
news@nst.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday that he would stop commenting if the bridge across the Johor Strait was built.

"Pak Lah (Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi) has to build the bridge. If he does that, I don't have any more comments."

His reply came spontaneously when he was asked by reporters to comment on deputy Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin's sale of

his stake of 10.2 million shares in ECM Libra Avenue Bhd, a financial services company. Khairy is also Abdullah's son-in-law.

"Oh yes...that is good. First, they have to sell, then they should leave the fourth floor and go away somewhere and Pak Lah has got to build the bridge. If he does that, I don't have any more comments."

"Now Proton is dead...all the vendors, all the dealers and salespeople are all losing money, so they are doing a good job serving Proton as promised by the Prime Minister."

Dr Mahathir, speaking after a convocation ceremony at the Multimedia University, also challenged Khazanah Nasional's board of directors to show proof that they did not support Proton's decision to buy debt-ridden MV Agusta SpA in 2004.

Negri Sembilan Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamad Hassan had said on Saturday that he was in Khazanah at that time and "we never agreed to the purchase as Agusta was saddled with a RM400-million debt, but the plans went directly to the top".

Dr Mahathir said: "They can prove it. I am quite sure they have documentary proof of this. Bring it out and show that there was no approval."

The former prime minister also hit back at Pahang Umno chief, Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob, who alleged that Dr Mahathir was being used by some quarters.

"He (Adnan) is entitled to his opinion. When I was prime minister for 22 years, there were a lot of irresponsible people influencing me."

On the statement by Minister in the Prime Minister's De-

partment Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz that he believed Dr Mahathir wanted to topple the Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir replied: "He has his opinion. I have my opinion, *takde apa* (it's nothing). This is a democratic country. It is his right to say what he wants."

Asked if he had such an intention, Dr Mahathir said: "Not me. I have no way of toppling the Prime Minister of this country...no, no way. I am not forming a new party and I am not doing anything. I am not even allowed to talk to Umno (leaders and members)".