



Mahathir: *Pak Lah has a right to shoot it down, I have a right to shoot it up*

Economist. And they wrote nasty things about me after I gave them an interview.

everyone who is employed even though they have become deadwood. We try to shift them around but not drop them. There could be other ways of economising. The problem with dropping people or dismissing people is that it creates a lot of social problems.

What are the other ways?

For example, we should study our cost structure to see whether it's the right cost or whether it can be reduced in some other ways.

On the topic of transparency, Petronas has been criticised as the world's least transparent oil company in a survey. Would you like to respond to that?

I believe it should be transparent, but it's up to Petronas. It's a big company. It's the biggest company in Malaysia.

In the interview, you mentioned that Singapore never asked for sand and air space, that it was the Malaysian Government which offered sand and air space. Is this true?

I think so. As far as I know, it was Malaysia which offered to sell sand and open up air space. In return, Singapore was supposed to build the bridge. That's what I heard. Maybe the government can verify whether it is true or it isn't. This government is very transparent, so I'm sure the government will tell everything if you ask them. If you ask me, it's difficult. I only hear rumours.

You have been promoting the gold *dinar*, but Pak Lah recently shot down the idea of using the gold *dinar* as the currency. Is it consistent with what you have been promoting?

He has a right to shoot it down, I have a right to shoot it up.

What do you think of corporate governance in Malaysia compared to the region and the world?

Corporate governance is improving in line with the government's advice and decision to be transparent. Now, we have corporate governance that is more transparent.


Datuk Seri S Samy Vellu (MIC President) is alleged to have said that you had contributed nothing to the Indian community under the Eighth Malaysia Plan. What's your reaction to this?

He rang me up and said he did not say such a thing. You know reporters, sometimes they write something that is not quite the same. And sometimes, the sub-editor may change what the reporters tell them. By the time you read it, it might not be the actual answer. I was in Turkey when he rang me up and said he did not say such things. And as a good friend of mine, I believe him.

And you accepted his explanation?

I'm always willing to accept other people's explanations.

Did Datuk S Subramaniam (MIC Deputy President) call you?

No, he didn't. 

HOLDING COURT

Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad recently officiated the 'Malaysian Business Corporate Governance Award 2005'. Although retired, his views are still much sought after.

By Ooi Sue Hwei

IT HAS been two-and-a-half years since Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad retired as Prime Minister. But as many would agree, Dr Mahathir does not seem to have lost any of his sharpness and wit when it comes to commenting on current issues. The Prime Minister again showed his mettle when he fielded questions from reporters on a range of issues at a Press conference after officiating the 'Malaysian Business Corporate Governance Award 2005'. Excerpts:

Is there a message you would like to give leaders of GLCs or any other companies which are not doing so

well compared to the winners of today's awards?

When you're not doing so well, you must do well.

On the topic of corporate governance, can you comment on Malaysia Airlines' voluntary separation scheme?

That is one way of reducing costs. Of course, it may cause some social repercussions.

Is it good that MAS is offering it?

It's good in one way, it's not so good in another way.

Can you elaborate?

Frankly, I'm not for getting rid of people. In the government, for example, we keep