

# UCLA journal puts

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# Dr M on record

## PM MADE POLITICAL IMPACT LAST YEAR, SAYS JOURNAL

KUALA LUMPUR, Friday

DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad created a great imprint on the local and international political scene throughout last year, according to an article in Asian Survey — a University of California (UCLA) journal reviewing contemporary Asian affairs.

The Prime Minister keeps such a tight control over government affairs and matters that a civil service rumour has it that "it is impossible to fell a tree in Kuala Lumpur without his permission," adds the article.

The article written by Dr Zakaria Haji Ahmad, Deputy Director-General of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia, says that last year might well have been the beginning of the consolidation of the Prime Minister's primacy in Malaysian politics.

It also marked the marriage of economics and politics in a more intertwined public policy context made possible by the nature of his style and leadership.

The article says that Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir's emphasis in economics is not new but the political basis and impact of his thinking on national decision-making are given a vitality last year.

According to the article, in 1984, the hand or thinking of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir was critical in the agricultural policy guidelines as well as the Mid-Term Review of the Fourth Malaysia Plan and the 1985 budget.

It also says the Prime Minister's imprint on foreign policy continued unabated throughout last year, highlighted by his visits to both industrialised and developing countries.

It reflected his desire to increase trade and investment opportunities, South-South relationships and to expand ties with non-traditional countries.

The economic theme in Malaysian foreign policy was stressed more last year and the government exhorted its diplomatic service to go beyond its traditional political analysis role and move toward selling Malaysia.

The Prime Minister's impact in this area is also reflected in his theme of "equality" among nations in an interdependent world.

Malaysia's calling for the recognition of Antarctica as a common heritage of mankind and the better appreciation in the West of Islam as a modernising force showed his exercise of leadership in international thinking, it adds.

The article says the developments of 1984 hold promise for the future but indications are

that the years of excessive public spending are less likely to recur and there will no longer be an "era of free lunches" (reference to a statement by the Prime Minister who said there is no such thing as a free lunch).