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Hope October never ends

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BUT October, like other months, will of course come to an end. The young Malay Mail reader who sent this SMS wishing that Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would stay on as his Prime Minister will not get his wish. The good doctor will pass the baton to Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi on November 1.

"It took me 22 years to appreciate you so how about another 22 years? I'm going to miss you. TQ SIR," wrote B. Ng.

Another reader's SMS says Dr M's presence has become a habit to Malaysians. "What the hell do we do now?"

Wrote ACWK, "... u r like an ecilpse (sic) that we can c once in a billion years". Of course, an eclipse... how many years. Still, you get the point.

"THANK U for taking care of all of us 22 million Malaysians for 22 years," wrote Dato Dahan Latiff. And from Sanggat Singh, "Please don't leave. Please don't go. I don't no what's going to happen without u in the future".

The short messages sent by the readers to The Paper That Cares as a tribute to their outgoing prime minister make a good read. At the end of the page, you don't have to be in love with the man to realise that the man is loved by many - Malays, Chinese, Indians, Eurasians and others - Malaysians from all walks of life.

Even nine-year old Danial, probably using his mom's cellular, wrote: "Will always luv u".

Some of the messages are unabashedly honest. "... t.u. for my semi-detached hse, Peugeot and Waja, golf m/ship etc.. Bukan semua Melayu mudah lupa."

Readers sent SMS to thank Dr Mahathir for the Petronas twin towers, Penang bridge, Proton Saga, the highways, and things that make life better for them or simply make them proud to be Malaysians.

M. Thomas from Ampang: "Thank you for keeping us from hunger, pain, sorrow and war all thru the 22 yrs of yr premiership."

John Drison of Seremban: "Yr name is engraved in all Msian hearts so nothing can wash it away".

J. Capel: "My late dad was a great fan (of yours), we salute yr outspokenness"

By the end of the Malay Mail's To Sir With Love, an SMS tribute to the prime minister on October 31, our computer system would be laden with thousands of short messages of tributes to Dr Mahathir.

I am not surprised at all by the great flood of SMSs that poured in as soon as the Malay Mail, the paper I edit, invited readers to pay tribute to the PM via SMS.

For most of us, the SMS has become the most popular, convenient, practical means of communication. It's also cheap. Letters and postcards have become so outdated since the SMS. Even the e-mail is cumbersome. When was the last time you heard of anyone talking about receiving a telegram? Telex, fax, the pager are things in the past.

The best thing about the SMS is that as long as a person carries a handphone, he cannot claim to have not received your SMS. With the phone, you can ignore the ringing if you need to avoid the caller. But with the SMS there is nowhere to hide.

Dr Mahathir made it possible for Malaysians to enjoy this First World

telecommunications facility. The tributes via the SMS, therefore, are so fitting.

"You may step down as our leader, but u will never step out of our hearts".

"Dr M, u r the man!"

"Truly GOD's gift to a nation".

From couple Anwar & Lina: "DR M, U CAN BE OUR PM 4EVER".

And from azizi, mas & d angels: "Sir, we promise to take gd care of our country n will try not to let u down. TQ n we pray u n yr family gd health n happiness always".

Happy retirement, Sir.