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Mahathir moments

THE camera never lies. Whatever poise we might develop, whatever smile we might fake, the camera captures our innermost thoughts - even our soul - without our ever knowing it.

In his 22 years in office, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has had to stand in the unending gaze of the public eye, despite his aversion to publicity.

Often, we are far too critical of what we see: We read too much into his smile, his frown, his face, without thinking that here is a man, a human being.

He is happy, he is sad. He can be angry, impatient, tired. Yet he is also compassionate, playful and capable of unutterable joy. We would know it if we were but to see it.

It is here that Mahathir 22 Years 22 Voices shines - ironically through the very medium Mahathir avoids. This beautiful book captures through poignant photographs the Prime Minister's entire career as a public man and as a private citizen.

We see him handling the Press (a frown), enjoying time with his family (a twinkle in his eye), and going wild in a go-kart (a laugh). We see the public politician addressing the crowd; we see the private man spending time relaxing with his deputy.

Featuring an interview with Mahathir himself, as well as personal messages from luminaries such as Jacques Chirac and Lady Thatcher, Mahathir 22 Years 22 Voices is a remarkable tribute to a remarkable man.