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Sharp and has a good sense of humour

Ramlan Said

Assistant news editor

COVERING the Prime Minister is certainly a feather in the cap in the career of a But with Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, it is more than that. It's a joy. One You can ask him about almost anything - politics, social, economy, sports - fr Once a journalist asked Dr Mahathir to comment on the deaths of dugong, a sea The woman journalist sheepishly told the Prime Minister that she had been dire That is the best thing about him, he is so accommodating and accessible. "I ca Many foreign journalists are amazed to see how easy it is for the media to app In their countries, they could only dream of "ambushing" their presidents and But for Malaysians, scenes of Dr Mahathir being "mobbed" or surrounded by news More often than not, he will oblige requests for a Press conference at the end The Prime Minister is sharp in his replies as can be vouched by foreign journa The tables are often turned against the seasoned journalists by the PM's no-no Once, replying to a question from a foreign journalist, Dr Mahathir remarked a Dr Mahathir shot back. "Do you think you are stupid?" came the reply.

"So, if you think you are not stupid, my comment is not aimed at you then."

On another occasion, during a briefing on Malaysia's satellite and space progr Dr Mahathir had barely settled in his seat when a question was flung his way b The question was about the bomb blast at the JW Marriott Hotel in Jakarta. Dr He was back to his genial self after the function. Approached by reporters who During overseas trips, newsmen have to dig deep into their reserve to match t "It is work, work and work. I wonder how he is able to keep up with the pace,"

Farush Khan

Assistant news editor

MY first "real encounter" with Dr Mahathir was when he visited the petroleum s I had asked him a question on the petroleum industry. I believed he didn't lik My attempt to get a different reply from him only resulted in unwanted attentio After covering his functions quite regularly in later years when he was alread At a packed Press conference in Felda Jengka some time in the 90s, Dr Mahathir I was sure he knew I had wanted to ask on the problems in that country then, b There are times, he can be "jokingly threatening".

At a Press conference at the Kepala Batas airport in Alor Star, in the 90s als I must also admit that Dr Mahathir has tremendous energy. One evening, some ti Following closely, I could not help thinking whether at 70 years of age, he co To my surprise he not only completed it with ease, but early next morning whil Even some of his close aides were left behind.

My worst experience was when I was left alone overnight in Medina by Dr Mahath Just like the rest, after two nights in Medina, I received a note from his aid Almost all of us then entered the Masjid Nabawi (the Mosque of the Prophet). I When I returned to the Oberoi Hotel at 7.15pm, I froze when I discovered none I spent the night looking at the stars in the open space outside the mosque af I refused to book into the hotel for two reasons - the room rate was RM900 a n It was in Riyadh when I learnt that at the time when I "almost fainted", Dr M I would have been on the same private jet had someone from among members of th Sarban Singh

Specialist writer

DURING a visit to University Malaya after the Dewan Tuanku Chancellor was dama To this, Dr Mahathir said: "Agreed. We will not interfere in campus affairs bu The PM also has his ways with BN component parties. One of the main reasons wh To this, Dr Mahathir said at a Press conference: "The MCA may have done well i

"(And) When the MCA did not do so well (as in the 1990 election), we did not r
While visiting Tenaga Nasional in May 2001, Dr Mahathir made another classic j
Dr Mahathir said with the higher life expectancy among the Malaysian workforce
"I know one person who is 76 years old and still working," he said.
Also two months later, while on a visit to Sirim in Shah Alam, the PM was aske
Saying that this was not necessarily true, Dr Mahathir said: "I was a student