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Online tributes to Dr Mahathir

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DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will be recognised in history as one of the more prominent and eminent figures in the world. However, to Malaysians, he is simply the country's longest-serving Prime Minister who has helped raise the quality of life and standard of living of Malaysians, matching those of the developed world today.

He has also been responsible for many of the country's achievements, among them; the national car projects, the Twin Towers, the Penang Bridge, the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) and many more.

Dr Mahathir has served the last 22 years as the country's fourth Prime Minister. His achievements are numerous and these are documented on the Internet. His speeches are available online at the official Prime Minister's Office Web site at: <http://www.pmo.gov.my/WebNotesApp/PMMain.nsf/fsMainPM>.

I was still in school at the time Dr Mahathir became the Education Minister after the 1974 general elections. I did not return from my studies until the mid-Eighties. By then, Dr Mahathir had been Prime Minister for about four years.

For someone very young then and who had gone abroad right after school, the impact of Dr Mahathir's administration was hardly felt. But I remember one of his trips to the United States, in particular to the Mid-West.

He had gathered a couple of hundred Malaysian students from the Mid-West for a formal dinner in a hotel in Chicago. After dinner, he made a speech.

One of the things I remembered Dr Mahathir saying was the launching of Malaysia's national car. Several months later, I was back from my studies and the Proton Saga was launched. In the same year, the Penang Bridge was opened.

At that time, computers were starting to make its presence felt in schools. Slightly more than 10 years later, in 1997, the Smart School project of the Education Ministry was launched. And by this time, the Internet had caught the interest of many Malaysians.

In other words, Dr Mahathir came in when computers were hardly heard of and considered a mystery. Today, so much progress has been made in the area of information and communications technology (ICT).

Interestingly, Dr Mahathir's achievements are now recorded on the Internet and news related to his activities and tributes to the country's achievements can be found in several Web sites. Among them are <http://www.ugmc.bizland.com/index-2.html> and <http://mahathirmohamad.newstrove.com/>.

As someone who has done the country proud, Dr Mahathir has many fans.

Taidin Suhaimin (<http://www.ugmc.bizland.com/index-2.html>) describes the Prime Minister as "highly intelligent, legendary, futuristic, smart, versatile, positive, humble, diligent, loving, daring, principled, compassionate, exemplary and hard working".

While some may be critical of the Prime Minister's actions in the past, he is however not without admirers. Even more interesting as Dr Mahathir completes his term as the Prime Minister is the invitation to all Malaysians to send their tributes and appreciation as a form of acknowledgment to what he has helped us achieve.

To send a short message service (SMS), visit: <http://www.celcom.com.my/html/promote/goversmspm.htm>. Read about its Kempen SMS Kasih Perdana.

You may send thank you notes, messages of appreciation and admiration to the Prime Minister for his contributions for the last 22 years. However, this opportunity is available only to Celcom 019 and TM Touch 013 customers. If you are a subscriber, visit the Web site for the step-by-step guide on how to send your SMS to the Prime Minister. To encourage you to participate, there are cash prizes to be won. For example, if you happen to be the 100,000th sender, you will receive RM1,000.

Your messages will be compiled and handed over to Dr Mahathir during a gala dinner hosted by Celcom. How about that?

The Malay Mail newspaper is also organising a SMS tribute to the Prime Minister. Check out www.mmail.com.my/reg for details.

Another opportunity to record your appreciation is made available by TV3. Visit <http://www.tv3.com.my/tribute/dedikasi.html> to find out how. The dedication service is available to all mobile phone subscribers except those using TimeCel.

Again, it is interesting to note that the Internet has offered an additional channel for all to pay tribute to someone who has done so much for the country. And appropriately so, I must say.