

Recollections of PM's youth

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ALOR STAR, Mon. — A lively recollection of the Prime Minister's character, early school days and working life was held today in conjunction with the first anniversary of the restoration of the house where Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was born.

Six personalities, ranging from the Prime Minister's close friends and former teachers, spoke at a gathering outside the historical premises in Lcrong Kilang Ais here of their experiences with Dr Mahathir.

The friends are Osman Abu Bakar, Ahmad Ariffin and Mohamed Bahar Abdul Hamid while the former teachers are Omar Mohamed, Zakaria Mohamed Noor and Mohamed Zain Abdul Rashad.

Osman, 71, recollecting his acquaintance with Dr Mahathir as a classmate and friend, said:

"We sold *kopi-o* together at Pekan Rabu during World War Two when our studies were halted.

"I met him when we were in Standard Five and he was a very reserved person, but intelligent and caring," added Osman.

Former Quran teacher Zakaria, 74, said he taught Dr Mahathir and his siblings the Quran every day for an hour in the evenings.

"I was approached by their mother to teach religious studies. Their father, Mohamad Iskandar, was always present during these lessons," quipped Zakaria.