

**Independence politician Omar Ong dies aged 92**  
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Omar Ong Yoke Lin, a former senior politician and the last surviving member of Malaysia's first independence cabinet, died on Thursday aged 92, an aide said.

Born on July 23, 1917, Ong was a prominent ethnic Chinese leader who played a key role in the country's road to independence from Britain in 1957.

Ong was a founding member of Malaysia's second largest political party, the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) in 1949 and a contemporary of Malaysia's first prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman.

"Ong died early this morning due to old age and will be buried at the Warrior's Mausoleum following prayers later this afternoon," an aide to the former minister, who declined to be named, told AFP.

In 1952, along with Umno, Ong's MCA helped form an alliance to contest city municipal elections in British-ruled Malaya, as the country was then known.

Ong helped form the Alliance Party, which won the first country-wide legislative elections in 1955.

Converted to Islam

Based on the success of the Alliance Party, Tunku led a delegation to London in 1955 to negotiate independence, which was granted two years later.

The newly-independent country was led by the Alliance party, which formed the basis of the present ruling BN coalition.

Ong served in various cabinet positions before being made ambassador to the United Nations.

From 1973 to 1980, Ong served as president of the upper house of parliament before retiring from politics. Ong converted to Islam in retirement.

The MCA, which was once an influential party, was devastated in the March 2008 national polls when it lost more than half its parliamentary seats.

The elections also saw the BN lose its two thirds majority and control of four states to a resurgent opposition.

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