

**Dr Mahathir, please save your breath <http://www.google.com/buzz/post>
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COMMENT On his return from Melbourne, Dr. Mahathir recounted his hospital experience and was full of praise for the Epworth Hospital and its 'Home service' facility

He described how the 'Home Hospital' was fully staffed with doctors, specialists and nurses who continued the full medical treatment at home, supported by visits from doctors at appropriate times. The patient had the advantage of being in the comfortable surroundings of home and family, but is fully cared for by competent medical staff.

Mahathir even complimented the ambulance service and said that the ambulance personnel were highly trained to treat ill people before being taken to hospital

He wondered if Malaysia had a similar 'Home Hospital service' and said that it would be beneficial to have one: "I don't know if we have this service or not but I believe it can contribute to being a developed country."

He said that with regards to the Malaysian ambulance service, he knew of one failed attempt by local doctors in Kuala Lumpur, which did not prove lucrative enough for the financiers. He believed that the Government and the other hospitals did not operate a full ambulance service. He said, "A good ambulance service can save many lives."

It is a shame that Mahathir was only full of praise after he had to experience for himself the exceptional medical facilities provided by the Melbourne hospital. If he hadn't been taken ill, then he would not have known what was available, what works and what level of dedication the Australian medical staff were capable of.

Wouldn't it be ironical if he had been attended and treated by Malaysian doctors and nurses who settled in Australia? The same people who could not get scholarships to train or study under his preferential educational award system, who on graduation found that jobs were hard to come by because they were not of a particular race or religion.

Mahathir was Malaysia's premier for 23 years. He introduced various policies that split the nation and whose detrimental effects are still being felt today.

His authoritarian rule meant that those beneath him emulated his style of governance.

In many cases, government permits or licenses are needed, but these were not forthcoming for a variety of reasons.

Creative people, people who show initiative or individuals who were full of promise found that their ideas did not progress beyond a certain stage.

In some cases, the ideas were poached by others.

Sometimes, the amount of help or the time taken to obtain approval from the key people in government was directly proportional to the amount of 'squeeze' offered.

At times, the key people in government would demand a share of the profits or that a relative is included on the management board.

Unfortunately, the culture of work and attitude to work, during, and also after, Mahathir's era meant that good ideas never took off unless it was sanctioned by key people in government. Is it any wonder that many people avoid doing business in Malaysia?

Mahathir forgets that his policies do not attract talent. Local pay and less than ideal working conditions also mean that many skilled staff go abroad to work. How many nurses have we lost to the Middle East and elsewhere?

The atmosphere during his tenure was stifling. The civil service is staffed by incompetent people, who do not see the urgency in a project, or whose experience is limited, or who subscribe to the 'herd mentality'.

In many towns, mature trees are cut down. When asked "why", the usual response from the government department is because the branches will get rotten and might break off and harm someone. The operative words are "will" and "might", but the whole tree is chopped down anyway. In neighbouring countries, mature trees which line the boulevards are preserved. These form part of the natural attraction that they qualify to be called 'garden city'.

When we gained independence, the British left a good family planning program to control the size of large families who invariably ended up in poverty. With contraception and education, family size was controlled, poverty decreased. But in the seventies, Mahathir had this grand design to make the population 70 million. The family planning program was sidelined. Could this have contributed to the explosion in abandoned babies as education and awareness were non-existent?

Our local hospitals are understaffed and overworked. In more advanced countries, diabetic patients obtain a high level of care. Not so in Malaysia, where to save time and money, limbs are routinely amputated.

Mahathir was responsible for the 'grab' culture. Under his tenure, people only think of themselves and how they can profit, rather than thinking of what is good for the community or the country. The sad thing is that people have forsaken values and replaced them with monetary gain.

How many government servants and politicians have we sent on 'study trips' to foreign countries ostensibly to make a detailed analysis of a particular place or concept? Weren't these really an excuse for foreign holiday travel using taxpayers money? We rarely see the ideas garnered from these trips, come to fruition.

So whose fault is it that our hospitals and ambulance service could do better?

If Mahathir had paid special attention to the specific needs of the country and its peoples, rather than pursue his own personal agenda, we would have had first class medical care with doctors and nurses who might have stayed in Malaysia. As it is, he can repent at leisure, about what we could have achieved by now, during his recuperation.

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