

# Mahathir, once powerful, is snubbed by his Malaysian party - International Herald Tribune dated 11 September, 2006

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## Ex-leader of Malaysia is sidelined by party

Mahathir bin Mohamad, who once ruled Malaysia for 22 years, was denied a chance to attend his party's congress as a delegate last weekend, placing 9th out of 15 candidates.

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## Mahathir, once powerful, is snubbed by his Malaysian party

By Seth Mydans

**SINGAPORE:** Mahathir bin Mohamad, who towered over Malaysia for 22 years as prime minister, failed over the weekend to win a seat as a delegate to his party's congress, placing ninth out of 15 candidates in his small constituency.

His failure to become one of 2,292 delegates to the congress was the latest humiliation for Mahathir, 81, who has grown increasingly isolated in his attacks on Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi of Malaysia, whom Mahathir chose to succeed him three years ago.

Pushed off the front pages of the newspapers he once controlled and abandoned by the politicians he had once commanded, he had apparently seen the November congress of his party, Umno, as a chance for a political showdown.

But in a country where power plays

out behind the scenes, it appeared that party leaders had consolidated behind Abdullah against what had become an embarrassing challenge from the fringes.

As a former prime minister, Mahathir holds no official position, and he was raising what has suddenly become a lonely voice against the party machinery with which he once crushed his opponents.

It has sometimes seemed that Mahathir was the last to know that he is no longer wearing the emperor's clothes.

"I thought they supported me because of what I was doing for the country," he complained of his former aides in July. "Now I know they supported me because I was prime minister."

When he entered the party meeting Saturday in his longtime constituency of Kubang Pasu in northern Kedah state, he was greeted with cheers and accepted congratulations on his impending

victory. But it soon became clear that his defeat had already been ordained and he walked out quietly before the vote was announced, followed by shouts of "Long live Mahathir!"

"We rejected him because we love him," Johari Baharum, head of the party division in Kubang Pasu and a former aide to Mahathir, told reporters. He said it would be demeaning for a former prime minister to serve as a simple delegate.

"I am very sad about what happened," he said. "We had already appealed to him against standing."

Party leaders have rejected Mahathir's accusation that they pressured party members to vote against him. They said tactics like that were more characteristic of Mahathir's own political style.

But analysts said hard-fisted politics of this sort are inherent to Malaysian politics, before, during and after Ma-

hathir's years in power.

"This is clearly the work of the Umno chiefs," said P. Ramasamy a former professor of political science at the National University of Malaysia.

"Umno is not a party that believes in patronage, so what I hear is that some of the members were told they should vote against Mahathir because if they vote for him they won't get the contracts for building mosques and so on."

The 470 party members in the constituency Mahathir had represented for 30 years chose seven delegates to the congress from among a slate of 15 candidates. Although Mahathir placed ninth, his son, Mukhriz Mahathir, made the cut, ranking fifth in the voting. The top vote-winner was a local schoolteacher.

As a former prime minister, Mahathir will be invited to the Umno congress in November, but because he will not be a delegate, he will not have the

right to speak.

Mahathir has attacked Abdullah for reversing many of his policies, including major infrastructure projects that the new prime minister said are too expensive.

He has derided Abdullah's low-key style, which itself seems to be an affront to Mahathir's aggressive, one-man leadership.

"It's a setback, but not one that will stop him from pushing ahead," Mukhriz said of his father's defeat.

Even though Mahathir is no longer part of the political landscape, he appears to be still driven by the combativeness that characterized his tenure.

"People say I am old and senile, unable to talk," he said last week, as party members were urging him to withdraw his candidacy. "Out of compassion, they want me to stay put, on a bed, marking time. That is not right."

International Herald Tribune

Mahathir, once powerful, is snubbed by his Keratan akhbar asing International Harold Tribune bertarikh 11 September, 06 mengulas tentang kegagalan bekas Perdana Menteri yang juga bekas Presiden UMNO, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad untuk menduduki salah satu tempat di antara tujuh orang perwakilan bahagian untuk menghadiri Perhimpunan Agung UMNO bulan November ini.

Artikel ini disiarkan di sini untuk dihayati oleh orang Melayu khususnya orang UMNO dan para pemimpin kerana ia bertujuan memburukkan imej Dr. Mahathir di mata dunia terutama sekali pada suatu ketika dahulu apabila Dr. Mahathir masih berkuasa beliau adalah seorang pemimpin dan Ketua Kerajaan dari negara kecil yang berani mengkritik dan menentang Presiden George W. Bush.