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Dr Mahathir 'jovial, looks strong'

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KUALA LUMPUR: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is "conscious and can speak" said his eldest son Datuk Mirzan yesterday.

And true to form, Dr Mahathir's first remark was "something funny" according to his other son Datuk Mokhzani.

Mirzan had no further comment yesterday afternoon after visiting his father at the National Heart Institute (IJN), but Mokhzani said Dr Mahathir had regained consciousness about 3pm with his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali by his side. She had spent the night at the hospital.

"The first thing he said was something quite funny. We didn't expect him to say that," said Mokhzani.

He did not reveal what his father said.

"He looks strong and is recovering very well. He's been asking the doctors about what happened during the surgery," he said, adding that his father is expected to remain in the intensive care unit until the end of the week.

He said Dr Mahathir had already seen all the nurses and doctors involved in the surgery and had thanked them individually.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi visited IJN yesterday at 5.15pm with his wife Datin Seri Jeanne Abdullah.

But Mokhzani said Abdullah did



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his wife Datin Seri Jeanne Abdullah accompanied by National Heart Institute chief executive officer Mohd Radzif Mohd Yunus (left) at IJN yesterday.

not get to see Dr Mahathir as visits to the ICU are limited to the immediate family members.

"The doctors briefed the prime minister on my father's condition and what is to be expected in the next few days.

"He was happy with my father's progress and sent the cabinet's best wishes to my mother and father," he said, adding that he wanted to thank all those who had been praying for his father's good health.

Abdullah and Jeanne spent 30

minutes at the hospital.

Dr Mahathir underwent his second coronary bypass surgery on Tuesday. The first was in 1989.

Tuesday's five-and-a-half hour operation was performed by a six-member team of surgeons headed by Tan Sri Dr Yahya Awang.

Mayo Clinic cardiothoracic surgery chief Prof Dr Hartzell Schaff, Datuk Dr Rozali Wathooth, Datuk Dr Azhari Yakub, Datuk Dr Venugopal Balchand and Dr Mohamed Ezani Mohd Taib comprised the rest of the team.

Mirzan and his wife were the first to arrive at IJN at 10am yesterday, followed by Dr Siti Hasmah's sister Tan Sri Saleha Mohamed Ali about five minutes later. Mokhzani arrived about 11am and Dr Mahathir's third son Datuk Mukhriz arrived at 12.30pm.

A statement released by IJN said Dr Mahathir will remain in the intensive care unit under close observation for at least another day.

The statement said doctors were happy with Dr Mahathir's progress.