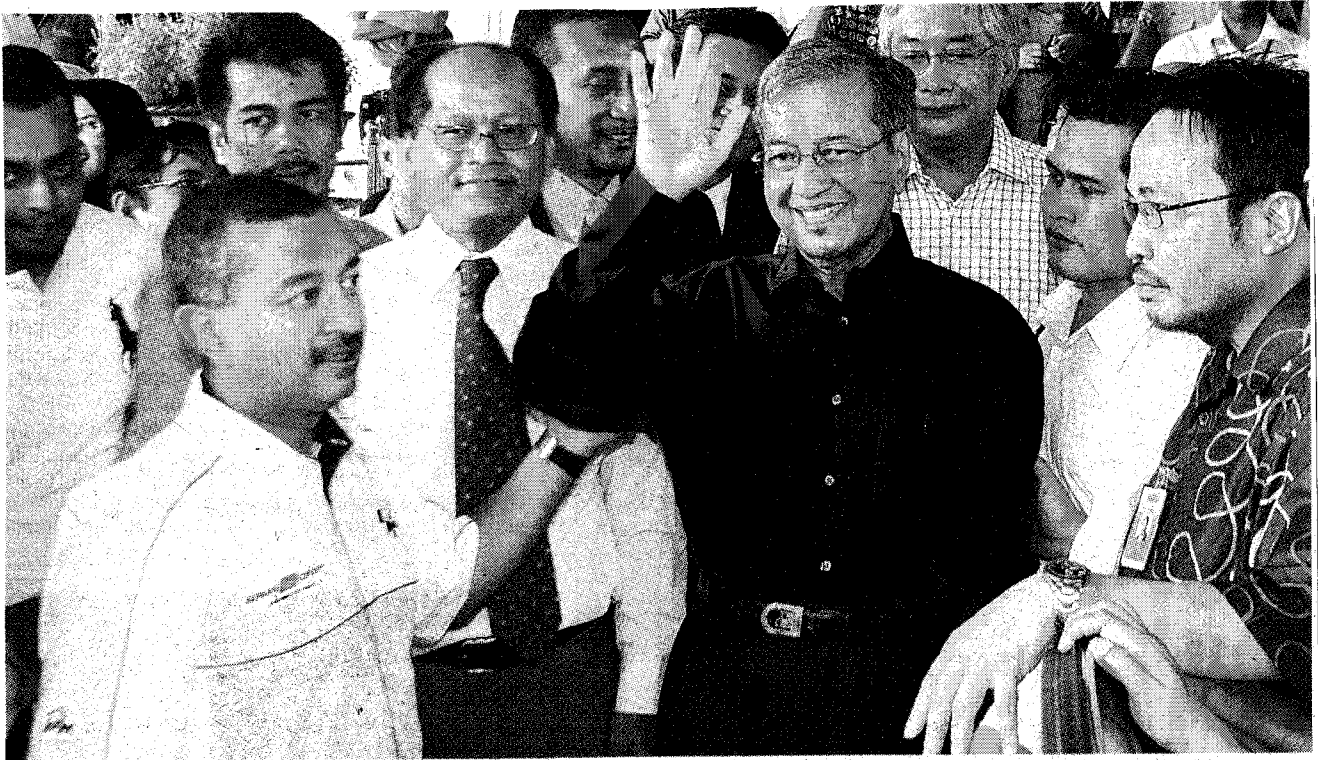


DATE: 22/10/2007



Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad waving to photographers after being discharged from the National Heart Institute yesterday. At left is his son, Datuk Mokhzani Mahathir.

Dr Mahathir discharged from IJN

NST- 22/10/2007

KUALA LUMPUR: After 50 days in hospital, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad was discharged from the National Heart Institute (IJN) in fine condition yesterday.

At 10.25am the 82-year-old former prime minister took a leisurely stroll from the elevator to his car, surrounded by family and IJN staff.

Dressed in a maroon shirt and black pants, Dr Mahathir stopped twice to allow jostling photographers to take his picture, smiling and nodding when his doctors asked him if he was all right.

His wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, walked behind him, her happy smile echoed by

their children, all of whom were there for their father's discharge.

"We're so happy for today. It's been a long up and down road," said Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir.

Asked what Dr Mahathir would be doing at home, Marina replied: "Resting!"

"He just wants to go home and relax in a different atmosphere. He's been in the hospital for seven straight weeks. It's been exactly 50 days. It was a long time.

"It's nice to go home, I think, for all of us," she said.

Asked what was the first thing she would like to do with her father, Marina replied,

"Just relax and be at home with him.

"He still needs special care. He is still in recovery, he's just in another place."

Dr Mahathir was admitted to IJN on Sept 2 for a coronary bypass which was carried out on Sept 4. It was his second bypass surgery; his first was at the Kuala Lumpur Hospital in 1989.

On Sept 22, he underwent another surgery to clean the wound. His post-surgical rehabilitation, which includes physiotherapy, will continue at home.

For the next few weeks, Dr Mahathir will return to IJN for weekly check-ups, according

to his surgeon, Tan Sri Dr Yahya Awang.

"Within the next few weeks, he will be able to return to do all the things he used to," said Dr Yahya.

Marina said all the doctors and nurses came to say goodbye to her father in the morning, just before he was discharged.

"I think they were all more emotional than we were."

Marina said the family had mixed feelings about leaving the hospital.

"We've been cocooned by so much love here. The staff have become like family to us," she said. "They took such brilliant care of him."