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A huge dose of Dr M

Ex-PM's much-awaited autobiography goes on sale today

By JUNE H.L. WONG
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: After an eight-year wait, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's highly-anticipated autobiography hits the bookstores today.

The book titled *A Doctor in the House: The Memoirs of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad* comprises 62 chapters spanning 809 pages.

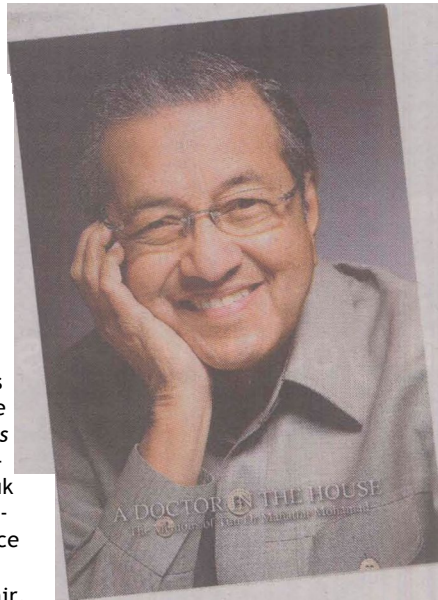
In it, the former prime minister covers a wide range of topics and reveals the behind-the-scene drama of many events such as *Ops Lalang*, the Judiciary, his relationship with his former deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and the allegations against former Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin.

The intensely private Dr Mahathir, who was prime minister from 1981 to 2003, also opens up on personal matters like his parents and growing-up years, his university years and his courtship of Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

Anwar is covered in two chapters: "Anwar Joins Umno" in which Dr Mahathir debunks the commonly-held belief that Umno wooed Anwar, saying it was Anwar who made the first move.

And in "Anwar's Challenge", Dr Mahathir deals with the decision to sack his former deputy.

Dr Mahathir says that police surveillance provided "evidence, includ-



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ing pictures and the confessions of the people involved" in Anwar's alleged sexual activities.

He also gives further details on the first sodomy allegations involving Anwar.

After dismissing Anwar, Dr Mahathir says the case was brought to the Umno supreme council.

"During his long explanation, Anwar never once referred to the question of homosexuality, focusing only on the affairs with women.

"He declared that he had done nothing unusual and insisted that everyone, including all the supreme council members, had done such things," writes Dr Mahathir.

In the chapter "Daim Becomes Finance Minister", he says he had to defend Daim against repeated allegations that he was lining his pockets and taking kickbacks.

He adds that "no clear evidence was ever produced", but the "whispering grew louder and more spiteful".

In the end, "when the talk got to be too much and I could not bear it anymore, I arranged for him to resign," writes Dr Mahathir.

On *Ops Lalang*, in which 106 people were detained and three newspapers closed down, Dr Mahathir maintains he was "flabbergasted" at the total number of arrests.

He mentions that he could not "countermand police orders" and had to accept responsibility and support the police action.

He also claims he did not know beforehand that the newspapers would be shut down.

In the chapter, "The Judiciary", Dr Mahathir gives his side of the story, saying he had no quarrel with Lord President Tun Salleh Abas.

He admits, however, that "in my early years as Prime Minister I was perhaps less discreet and must have publicly exhibited my frustrations with the Judiciary."

He also reveals what started the

whole saga that led to the sacking of Salleh - the latter's letter to the King complaining about the noise of the renovation being made to the King's private residence near Salleh's house.

He says the "Agong felt insulted" as Salleh had sent copies of the letter to all other Rulers.

In the book, Dr Mahathir also talks about his parents and his Malay-Indian heritage.

Although he has South Indian blood, he says: "I am a Malay and am proud of it.

"I am a Malay not just on paper. I am also a Malay in sentiment and in spirit," he adds.

The most touching part of the book is perhaps his revelations on how he courted his wife who was his classmate in medical school: "All the boys fell over each other to carry her books.

"Aside from female relatives, I had never really met girls before and had no idea how to behave around them.

"But I did not want to be left out, so I finally plucked up my courage to offer her my book-bearing services."

The couple declared their feelings for each other on April 23, 1949, a date they celebrate every year, writes Dr Mahathir.

A Doctor In The House will be launched today at Mid Valley Megamall and is available at MPH bookstores nationwide.

It retails at RM100 a copy.