

Newspaper	New Straits Times
Date	15/05/2012



Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin helping former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to wear the National Reading Icon gown at the national library yesterday. With them are (from right) Information, Communications and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim and his deputies, Datuk Maglin D'cruz and Datuk Joseph Salang Gandum. Pic by Effendy Rashid

Dr Mahathir named Malaysia's reading icon

NST-15/5/2012

VISIONARY: Former PM's ideas have helped transform the nation, says DPM

R. SITTAMPARAM
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

THE rich heritage of ideas propagated by former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad plus the government's transformation programmes had successfully steered Malaysia towards becoming a high income nation, said Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

The many great projects hatched and implemented by Dr Mahathir who was yesterday named the Na-

tional reading icon previously criticised by many as wasteful, were now even winning the support of the opposition.

He said while the opposition vehemently opposed Dr Mahathir's projects like the Penang Bridge and Putrajaya during his premiership, they were now singing a different tune including their "The Road to Putrajaya" aspiration.

Muhyiddin said Dr Mahathir, who was an avid reader well-versed in various fields other than the medical field, was always brimming with ideas and these had charted the development of Malaysia as a fast developing nation.

He said Dr Mahathir's Penang

Bridge, for instance, had contributed greatly to the development of Penang and surrounding areas.

Muhyiddin, who is also education minister, said considering the importance of reading, he proposed that the Education Ministry and Information, Communication and Culture Ministry upgrade the 9,721 school resource centres in the country.

He said this would help supplement the role of 2,661 government libraries to further promote the reading culture among Malaysians.

Dr Mahathir is the third National Reading Icon after astronaut Datuk Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor Al-Masrie (2009) and Datuk Michelle

Yeoh (2010).

Dr Mahathir, when asked how many books he read, replied: "I lost count. But usually I read about three books at one time."

Asked if he were the prime minister today, when would he think would be the best time to hold the elections, Dr Mahathir quipped: "After Hari Raya Aidilfitri."

He, however, said if Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak felt that the present economic situation was conducive he could decide to hold the election now.

Asked if Najib could achieve two-thirds majority in the election, Dr Mahathir said: "He can do better than the 2008 election."

On the Bersih 3.0 rally, Dr Mahathir said: "The Umno anniversary gathering last weekend attracted more than 100,000 people, but if they want, they can bring up to a million people."

"I lost count. But usually I read about three books at one time."

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad
former prime minister