

Numerous political tests

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What you are seeing is just on the development of the physical structure. But in terms of the development of culture, in terms of the resilience and perseverance of the Malays, I believe I haven't achieved much.

— On the Malays, July 2001.

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productivity and efficiency of services while reducing the Government's financial and administrative burdens.

In terms of politics, Dr Mahathir's leadership also faced numerous tests in the 1980s, namely the failed challenge by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah for the presidency of Umno in 1987.

Then, on Feb 4, 1988, the High Court declared Umno an unlawful society. Justice Harun Hashim found that the party's branches, established without the approval of the Registrar of Societies in four divisions — Pasir Puteh, Machang, Rantau Panjang and Pekan — caused not only the branch to be unlawful, but also the parent society.

The declaration was delivered following a suit brought by 11 Umno members who challenged the validity of the 38th party general assembly and party election the previous year.

Twelve days later on Feb 16, Dr Mahathir announced the registration of Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu (Baru), to replace the old Umno. Dr Mahathir also asserted that membership to the party was dependent on loyalty to Umno, and that those who caused it to become unlawful would not be accepted.

Dr Mahathir came out intact from these challenges, and the next year, 1989, would see a landmark of a different nature as the country hosted the 27th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kuala Lumpur.

A week-long affair, (it kicked off on Oct 18), the 27th CHOGM meeting will be remembered for its Langkawi Declaration, which was initiated by Malaysia.

The 10-point document incorporates the views of developed and developing countries in overcoming environmental degradation and emphasises a need to promote economic growth and sustainable development.

The following year, Dr Mahathir unveiled a long-term development objective for the nation, which would probably be remembered as his most enduring legacy for Malaysia.

Vision 2020 is the road map for the country

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SWANKY: Dr Mahathir and Perodua managing director Datuk Abdul Rahman Omar admiring the two-tone metallic elegant-green model of the Perodua Kembara on Aug 24, 1998

I will keep my mouth shut.

— When asked whether he would advise his successor, August 2001.



SUCH PRESTIGE: Dr Mahathir receiving the Honorary Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh from Professor John Cash (president of the college) in 1997. The award was in recognition of his contribution to the people of Malaysia and the world.