

A Tribute Issue

'He speaks his mind'

NST 31/10/2003 - 68, 70-71 PRECISE

We send our students to study there (Australia), they have good schools, good teachers but unfortunately they have a leader (John Howard) who is totally insensitive and thinks he is a white man sheriff in some black country.

— After Australian Prime Minister John Howard threatened pre-emptive strikes on foreign soil against terrorists who planned to attack Australians, December 2002.

If today Islam is perceived to be a religion of backward, violent and irrational people, it is not because of Islam itself as a faith and way of life. It is because Muslims have deviated from the fundamentals of Islam....

— On the misconception of Islam at the World Economic Forum, December 2002.

Come on, Malays, Have you forgotten?

— Opening speech at the Umno 55th General Assembly, June 2001.

People know that there are many ways to skin a cat. We have chosen the unorthodox way and the cat has been neatly skinned. The method does not count. The result counts.

— On the secret of Malaysia's success in overcoming the 1997 Asian financial crisis, May 2002.

IN HIS MORE THAN 20-YEAR tenure as Malaysia's fourth Prime Minister, right up to his last days in office, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has never failed to make global headlines with his hard-hitting remarks.

Many the world over love the visionary. His words continue to be studied, analysed and his clarion calls for the *ummah* to rise above challenges, incessantly serve as a reminder for them to meet benchmarks.

He has had his fair share of those who loathe him for standing up for what he knows is right and criticism levelled against him. When he speaks his mind he is labelled at international forums as a "recalcitrant", a "racist", "anti-Semitic", "one who shoots from the lips" ... the list goes on.

Nevertheless, his friends and foes in the global political arena alike, will greatly miss the leader as they reminisce "those days".

Compiled by ASHRAF ABDULLAH, with assistance from SHAMINI DARSHNI and FARRAH NAZ KARIM.

"THE success of the deliberations is in no small way attributed to the skilful leadership of Dr Mahathir and we look forward to Malaysia's guidance."

— **Guyana's Foreign Minister Samuel Hinds, on behalf of Latin America and the Caribbean, during the 13th Non-Aligned Movement Summit in February, 2003**

"I HAVE come here to Malaysia, to Kuala Lumpur, to express my respect and admiration for the achievements of this country under the leadership of Prime Minister Dr Mahathir ... Malaysia ... is ahead of the curve, is a particular success story."

— **International Monetary Fund managing director Horst Koehler at a media luncheon during his recent trip to Malaysia**

"THERE is no doubt that Dr Mahathir's leadership has been the dynamo of this renaissance."

— **Bahrain's Prime Minister Shaikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan on Malaysia's "miracle economy" and "dynamic development" on the second day of his three-day visit in February, 2002**

"NOW you have become a leading statesman on the world stage and powerful spokesman on major issues for the developing countries."

— **The then Langkawi International**



Dialogue international steering group co-chairman Lord Prior to Dr Mahathir before inviting the Prime Minister to open the dialogue in 1995

"HE (Dr Mahathir) is doing everybody a great service that we have to find ways to move up and open the way for trade liberalisation."

— **Franklin L. Lavin, executive director of the Asia Pacific Policy Centre, on the Prime Minister's speech at the first Pacific Dialogue in 1994**

"PROBABLY we have forgotten the term development plan, but Malaysia has implemented it steadfastly. Dr Mahathir separated politics from business interests. This should be emulated by Indonesia's political elite."

— **Indonesia's leading newspaper Kompas heaping praises on Dr Mahathir through its front-page article entitled "Dr Mahathir's Hand Lifts the Malays", June 27, 2003**

"THE region would lose a "strong, colourful personality" when Dr Mahathir steps down. His legacy is his forthright analysis of situations, calling a spade a spade and always coming up with bold ideas. He speaks his mind and he has been proven right on many occasions. The feeling in Asean is that a strong colourful personality like Dr Mahathir and his style will be missed."

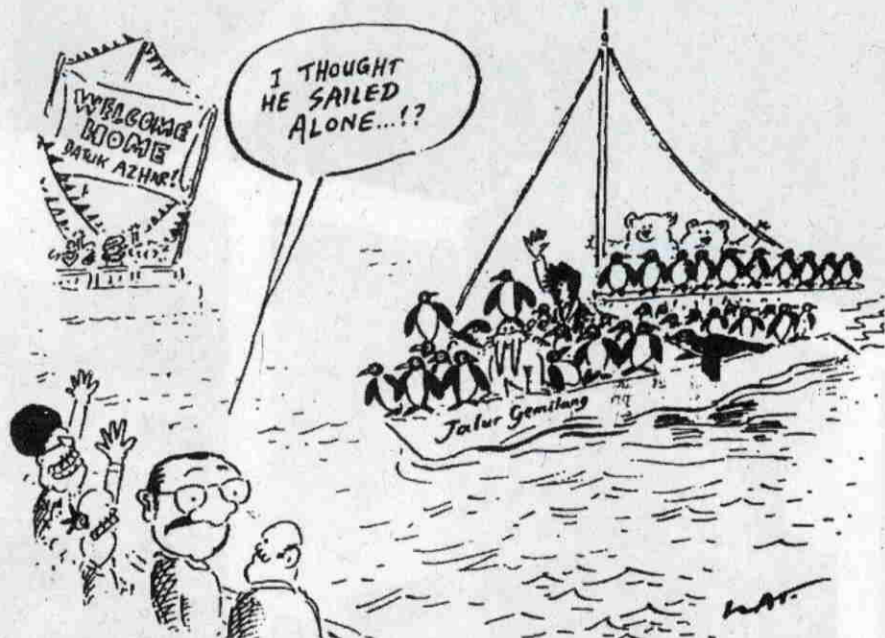
— **Asean secretary-general Ong Keng Yong on Dr Mahathir at the Asean Summit in Bali, Indonesia, Oct 6, 2003**

"THANKS to the Honourable Dr Mahathir's extraordinary and superb leadership and wisdom, he's the world's best living elected leader I can think of."

— **Former British minister Peter Mandelson on Dr Mahathir's leadership quoted from New Sabah Times, Sept 9, 2002**

"MALAYSIA has scored remarkable success in achieving social stability, ethnic harmony and economic development under that under Dr Mahathir's leadership, and with its sound infrastructure, rich resources and hardworking people, Malaysia will be able to again witness the revitalisation of its economy after necessary readjustment."

— **Chinese Vice-Premier Li Lanqing on Dr Mahathir's stewardship when addressing the Third Malaysia-China Forum, Aug 20, 1999**



"TO us in Myanmar, Dr Mahathir is more than a leader of the dynamic nation of Malaysia. He is a visionary statesman of the region and a staunch defender of the developing world."

— **Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt, Chief of Myanmar's secret police (now Prime Minister)**



"DR Mahathir has renowned credibility and is respected by everyone in the Third World. Although some of the rich countries may not be great fans of the Prime Minister, they still respect him. Even those who are sometimes annoyed by the way Dr Mahathir speaks and exposes them could not argue about Malaysia's success."

— **Timor Leste Foreign Minister Dr Jose Ramos Horta before the start of the 13th Non-Aligned Movement Summit in February, 2003**



"ASIA needs a political leader like Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who can lead other leaders in the region to form a co-ordinated political will to make Asian regional cooperation a reality."

— **Former Japanese Vice-Minister of Finance Prof Eisuke Sakakibara at the East Asia Congress in Kuala Lumpur on Aug 5, 2003**



"THOSE who had said that Malaysia would sink are now the first to praise Dr Mahathir."

— **Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe speaking at the launch of the Zimbabwe Asia Expo Centre Global 2002 in conjunction with the International Smart Partnership Dialogue in Langkawi on Aug 6, 2002**



"DR Mahathir is a great man. Whatever he says he bases it on what he feels in his heart and what he feels in his mind. And this is precisely what makes him a great man."

— **French President Jacques Chirac, July 23, 2003**



"THE mark of his personal statesmanship has been imprinted so deep in our consciousness that, in a larger sense, he will always be with us. The reach of his mind is so far and wide that on every issue laid before us, we always try to recall what Dr Mahathir said about it."

— **Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri as she delivered a speech to mark Dr Mahathir's last appearance at the annual Asean leaders' summit in Bali on Oct 8, 2003**



"WHEN Dr Mahathir voiced his views and opinions at international forums against apartheid, he sent tremors throughout the world. He continues to be just as forceful today and continues to send tremors with regard to issues about which he is passionate and in areas where he sees injustice."

— **Former Commonwealth Secretary-General Sir Shridath Ramphal on Dr Mahathir in NST Editorial page entitled "Enjoying fruits of Dr M's 22-year leadership", July 4, 2003**



"GIVEN his well-known views on globalisation, he can be expected to make sure NAM continues to serve as a bulwark against unilateral tendencies in international affairs."

— **President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa reiterating his belief that the Non-Aligned movement will continue to have great relevance with the succession of Dr Mahathir to the NAM chair, Feb 16, 2003**



"I AM a new and younger leader. So, I have no problems in admiring Dr Mahathir, placing him as a more senior leader in terms of political life, age and experience. I have admired him for many years, even before I entered politics."

— **Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra in an interview with New Straits Times stating that he is an ardent admirer of Dr Mahathir and his policies which include the acceleration of bilateral ties and a common destiny for Asia, July 10, 2003**



"I don't think he can retire. A personality like him (cannot do so) because he has almost become public property. He cannot retire. He must contribute."

— **interview with the New Straits Times in Oct 2003**

"I PERSONALLY think Dr Mahathir is a personality of tremendous potential and standing in the world, especially in the Muslim world. I would say he has the potential to contribute to the Muslim world, so one has to sit down and see how he can do so."

— **Pakistani President Gen Pervez Musharraf in an exclusive interview with the New Straits Times in Oct 2003.**



"I ADMIRE the incredible accomplishment of his (Dr Mahathir's) nation under his leadership over the past several years."

— **Former US President Bill Clinton, when asked what he thought of Dr Mahathir**



"I AM confident Malaysia will realise your vision by the Year 2020, and that the warm and close ties between our countries will continue to grow."

— **Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, in a letter to Dr Mahathir offering a congratulatory message on the nation's 37th National Day**



"IN fact, I got on rather well with Dr Mahathir and developed an increasing respect for him. He was tough, shrewd and practical. He had a refreshingly matter-of-fact outlook on everything that related to his country."

— **Former British Prime Minister Lady Margaret Thatcher in her memoirs, The Downing Street Years**

"IF finance ministers could be transferred like star football players, I could think of several very much larger countries which would pay astronomical transfer fees to get him (Dr Mahathir)."

— **Lady Margaret Thatcher at the 'Towards Asian Leadership' in Kuala Lumpur**



"I RESPECT him as a very learned person and a man of strong leadership. I have been Prime Minister for less than a year and he has been at the helm for more than 20 years. He has numerous insights into what leadership is and the future of Asia. I have a lot to learn from him on not only Japan-Malaysia relations but also on the overall political situation in Asia."

— **Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Dr Mahathir during his week-long visit to five Asean nations, Jan 9, 2002**



"DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is an old friend of China's people."

— **Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji, paying tribute to Dr Mahathir for his efforts to strengthen ties between China and Malaysia during his three-day working visit to the republic on Aug 19, 1999**



"YOU'RE the leader. You're the one who puts ideas in place and gives operational meaning to those ideas. In the end that's what matters to people."

— **Former US Secretary of State George Shultz giving credit to Dr Mahathir for leading Malaysia towards dynamic growth through Vision 2020 in 1996**

A Tribute Issue

'A symbol of vibrant Asia'

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We believe in the same thing... in the same methods. Of course, the styles will be different, but that is all right. I think it will be good for people to have a change.

— On sharing the same beliefs as his successor, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

I thought I could have avoided being emotional, but under the circumstances, I suppose I lost control of myself.

— Asked on his emotions when he announced his resignation at the Umno general assembly, October 2002.

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“HE is a planet which shines between the stars.”

— **Former Malaysian Ambassador to United Arab Emirates Datuk Syed Hussein Al-Habshee describing Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in a poem he had written in Arabic, Oct 2003**

“HE has turned Malaysia into a model to be followed by the developing and Islamic world, so much so the country is now known as the Japan of the Islamic world.”

— **OIC assistant secretary-general Azzat Mufti at the launch of a book entitled “Dr Mahathir Mohamad: From An Arab and Islamic Perspective”**

“HIS imprints will remain in the works and structure of OIC.”

— **Egyptian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohd Ezzeldin Abdel Monem, Oct 2003**

“DR Mahathir had made a clarion call for Muslims to unite and avoid indulging in any form of violence which would only be self incriminating.”

— **Iranian President Mohammad Khatami defending Dr Mahathir from criticism that he was anti-Semitic**

“I’m sure many of his colleagues want to hear from him about the Malaysian experience in terms of your reaction to the crisis which have begun to pay off handsomely.”

— **Former Commonwealth Secretary-General Chief Emeka Anyaoku on how leaders of Commonwealth countries are keen to hear from Dr Mahathir on Malaysia’s success in managing the financial recovery on Sept 8, 1999**

“DR Mahathir was just talking about issues confronting the Muslim world and what Muslims should do. His historic analysis of Islam was correct and Muslim communities must take a big step forward if they want to be a strong *ummah* and respected by others. Muslims must educate themselves, be progressive and develop themselves. It was great to hear Dr Mahathir speaking so eloquently on the problems of the *ummah* and ways to remedy them.”

— **Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai on Dr Mahathir’s comments during the OIC, Oct 17, 2003**



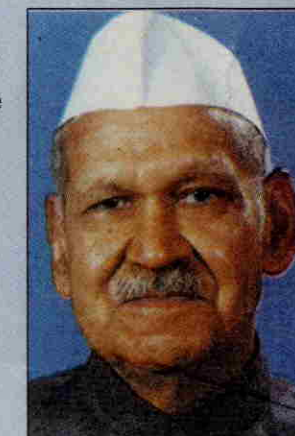
“MANY Japanese appreciate Dr Mahathir’s wisdom, experience and leadership. He is an outstanding Asian statesman who has made a significant contribution to the strengthening of Japan-Malaysia relations.”

— **Japan’s Ambassador to Malaysia Masaki Konishi on how the Japanese were eager to listen to Dr Mahathir’s views on how Malaysia and Japan could enhance ties as Asia undergoes great changes**



“WE welcome you as a symbol of a vibrant Asia. We admire you as a leader who has stood throughout his life for the principles and values which were illumined by Pandit (Jawaharlal) Nehru and are cherished by the Indian people. Your stewardship at a critical juncture in your nation’s destiny, has resulted in dynamic growth and all-round prosperity for the people of your country. Significant strides have been made in achieving sustainable growth with equity. Malaysia has emerged in the front ranks of the “Asian Tigers” who represent the new dynamic spirit of this ancient continent.”

— **Former Indian President Dr Shanker Dayal Sharma describing Dr Mahathir as an illustrious son of Malaysia**



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A Tribute Issue

Foreign leaders salute Dr M

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"DESPITE my differences with him, I made more progress solving bilateral problems with (Dr) Mahathir in the nine years he was Prime Minister from 1981 to 1990, when I stepped down, than in the previous 12 years with Tun (Abdul) Razak and (Tun) Hussein Onn as Prime Ministers."

— **Singapore's founding father Lee Kuan Yew said in the second volume of his memoirs**

"NO other Malaysian Prime Minister or minister had ever publicly said they had anything to learn from Singapore; (Dr) Mahathir did not suffer from this inhibition. This open-minded attitude of learning from anyone whose success he wanted to duplicate in Malaysia distinguished him from his predecessors."

— **Lee Kuan Yew on how Dr Mahathir wanted an open and frank relationship that would be fair and equitable, Sept 11, 2000**

"I KNEW he was a fierce and dogged fighter, I had seen the way he had fought the Tunku (Malaysia's first Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman) when Tunku was at the height of his power."

— **Lee Kuan Yew on Dr Mahathir, Sept 11, 2000**



"He is a recalcitrant."

— **Former Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating, criticising Dr Mahathir for failing to attend a ground-breaking summit of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) leaders in Seattle in 1999**



"DR Mahathir has turned Malaysia as an example of the continuing relevance of Islam in modernising a nation for peace and development."

— **Philippine President Gloria Arroyo-Macapagal in expressing confidence that Dr Mahathir had provided a model for continuing revitalisation in the 21st century as he assumed the baton as NAM's new chairman from South African President Thabo Mbeki, Feb 25, 2003**

"DR Mahathir has been a longstanding supporter of the struggle for democracy by the people of South Africa and has made an important contribution to this struggle in the international arena. Dr Mahathir has tirelessly promoted close bonds of friendship between the peoples of South Africa and Malaysia."

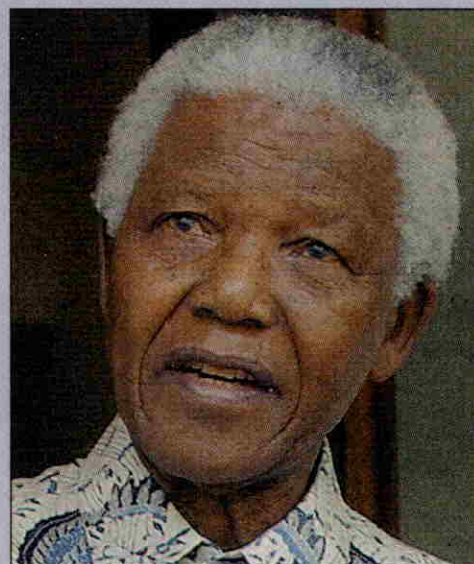
— **Reads a citation of South Africa's highest award for foreign leaders bestowed upon Dr Mahathir by President Nelson Mandela.**

"WE have received more than what we had asked for."

— **Former South African President Nelson Mandela in thanking Dr Mahathir for his "extremely positive" assistance in the struggle against apartheid, May 1, 1994**

"DR Mahathir was very positive and constructive in his response to the problems we raised and the requests we made. I gained the distinct impression, in fact certainty, that he (Dr Mahathir) can never let us down."

— **African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela in expressing confidence that Malaysia under Dr Mahathir's premiership will continue to contribute in important ways to the establishment of democracy in South Africa and the reconstruction of its economy, Aug 4, 1993**



I have decided, I have decided ... (it's been) too long already.

— **At the end of his winding-up address during the 2002 Umno General Assembly when he suddenly announced his resignation from all posts, June 2002.**