

You're unforgettable!

NST 31/10/2003 - 1, 7, 10 PRECISE

Dear Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir,
The entire country is getting weepy over your retirement today. You've been our beloved Prime Minister for 22 years, and for many of us, the only one we've ever known.

Although we are too young to have experienced the early struggles of your Government, we are fortunate enough to now enjoy the fruits of your labour and vision. Here are some of the wonderful things our YouthQuake readers will remember you for.

WE'LL always remember Dr Mahathir for our Proton cars, highways, KLIA, Twin Towers, the Sepang F1 circuit, Putrajaya, Multimedia Super Corridor ...

However, my father always reminds us that the Dr Mahathir's greatest achievement is his efforts to unite all Malaysians.

We read in the papers daily the praises showered on him. But his most significant achievement seems to have been forgotten!

We were not even born when Dr Mahathir became Prime Minister but he brought all Malaysians together when, soon after becoming Prime Minister, he synchronised the time of Peninsular Malaysia with Sabah and Sarawak.

All Malaysians now wake up, work, play and sleep at the same time. The time difference of 30 minutes no longer exists.

Let us all remember Dr Mahathir for making the time uniform throughout the country.

— **Raewynn and Raenette Tan**

IT was the school holidays and I had just filled every visible space on my skin with stick-on tattoos. My cousins and I were shopping at Lot 10 when we saw our Prime Minister walking briskly past with his army of bodyguards. We were so excited!

After mustering up our courage, we crept into the bookstore Dr Mahathir was in. We went up to him and said robotically: "Hello Dr Mahathir. Nice to meet you." Then we shook his hand one by one, then dashed

out of there as fast as our legs could carry us!

We were amazed that Dr Mahathir actually shook hands with us tiny Malaysians!

Even at that time, Dr Mahathir was simply the "Perdana Menteri ke-empat" (fourth Prime Minister) in our history

Hi Pak Lah,

A long wish list from young Malaysians around the country awaits you inside (see page 8).

Ever so often adults don't give us the time of day to listen to our woes. You are our shining beacon of hope.

Brace yourself! You asked for it ...

books. When the top scorers of the SPM exams in 2000 had the honour of meeting him, I vowed to work extra hard to get that privilege. I managed to meet the requirements, but unfortunately, there were too many top scorers in my year for us all to get a chance to dine with Dr Mahathir.

This year Dr Mahathir launched the Festival Kemerdekaan at the UiTM stadium.

His speech was tremendously exciting, humorous (did you know that Dr Mahathir can't swim?). His speech reached us on many different levels. He brought to reality that indeed as

■ TURN TO PAGE 7

May God bless you always!

Q&A

■ FROM PAGE ONE

great a man as he is, he is still ultimately human.

I'm mighty grateful for the stability and the dependability he portrayed. We teenagers need not have a care in the world — being in your capable hands, Malaysia is a cosy place to be. Thank you so much for that confidence — we love you and will miss you a whole lot, Dr Mahathir! Good luck in all that you do!

— Sarah-Jane Khong Mey Leong, 19

I AM truly amazed at all your achievements during the years you have been Prime Minister. It is so difficult to pick out a single incident as everything seems so good. I know you are only human and have made some mistakes ... so have I.

A move that I will remember you most for is when you changed the teaching of mathematics and science to English. It was truly a bold step in the right direction to bring about a change in the attitude of our youth. We will have children and grandchildren who love the English language remembering that we are Malaysians first and our love for Bahasa Malaysia will not be lessened in anyway.

Thank you dear Prime Minister. God bless you always,

— Theresa Marshall, Sitiawan

I WILL never forget the Vision 2020 plan set by our beloved PM as I am the proud owner of car number plate SUKOM 2020 registered on my Lexus/Harrier and currently in use in Miri and Bintulu and the envy of everyone. It gives me great pleasure to be a part of that vision which has seen me growing along with it.

Thank you, Dr Mahathir for being a great visionary and lover of peace. May God bless you.

— Sarjit Singh, Miri

I'M a fifth former at MRSM Jasir. I admire your leadership because you have successfully transformed Malaysia into an internationally-acknowledged developing country. I felt especially proud to be a Malaysian during a visit to South Korea. There I met a Swedish tourist who praised you endlessly. He spoke with amazement about our peaceful country.

May you continue to be blessed with good health, enjoying your retirement surrounded by your loved ones.

— Nazratul Ain Mohamad Ali

JUTAAN *terima kasih* (a million thanks). I have not had the chance to meet you in person yet, but look forward to meeting you after today, when your official duties are fewer, hopefully giving you more time and access to the public.

Meanwhile, thank you so much — Malaysia certainly has grown up a lot under your stewardship.

— Chew Sam Lin

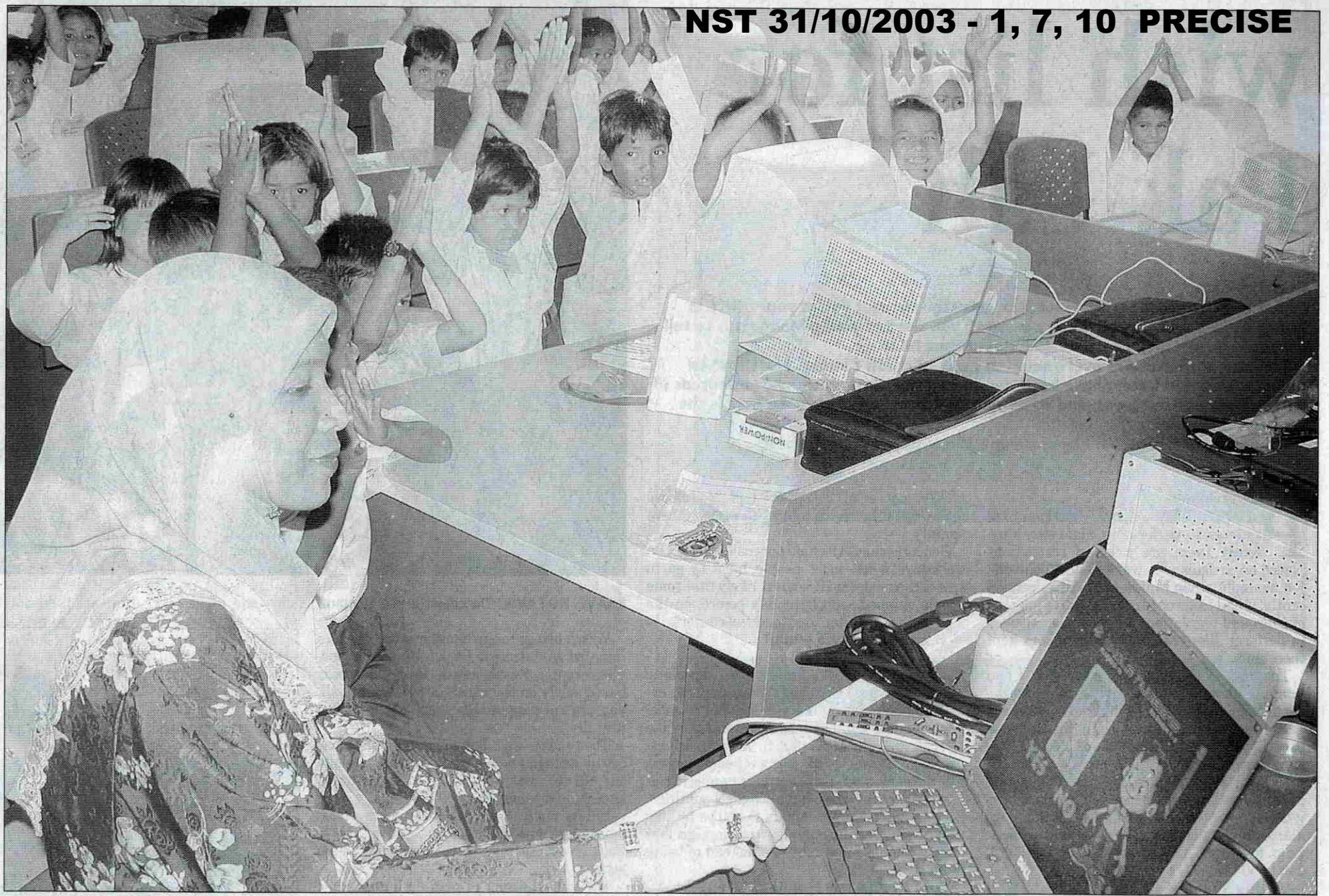
DR MAHATHIR has served as Prime Minister longer than I have been alive. I admire him for his trait of daring to speak his mind. His outspoken nature has hurt many, but also encouraged many.

My interest in Dr M started when I was doing my history project in Form 2. That was when I got to know more details about our homeland hero — from his birth to his many achievements.

He has moved many. His "Malaysia Boleh!", "Honesty Is The Best Policy", "Look East" policy are inspiring.

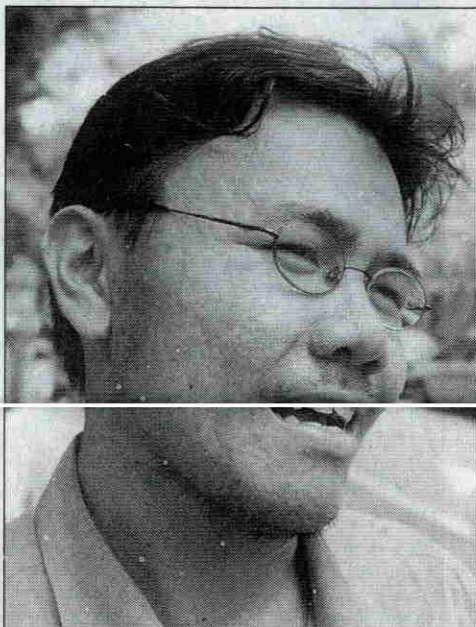
His final day of leadership has arrived. I dread this day, but I still hope that Dr M will remain visible as I have and will continue to benefit a lot from his speeches.

— Sue



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CHEERS: Students look forward to learning mathematics and science in English



MARKUS LIM

I ADMIRE Dr Mahathir for keeping firm to his principles and beliefs.

He isn't afraid of standing up for what he feels is right — like the issue regarding the Palestinians, and his views about the West.

He has set a good example for us follow — if our opinions are justified, we should stick to them no matter what.

— Markus Lim, 23, Gombak

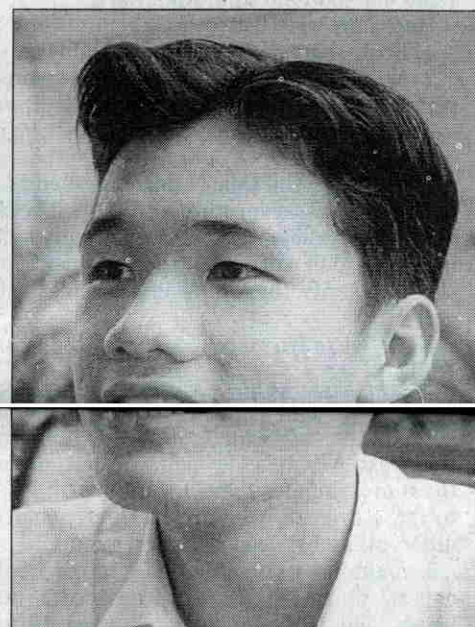


DURGASHARAN SUTHESWARAN

VISION 2020 teaches us to prepare ourselves mentally for an era of globalisation. It's a wonderful concept because with it, we can visualise a future for Malaysia. Personally, it teaches me to set my own goals and work towards them. It gives a person a sense of direction in life.

— Durgasharan Sutheswaran, 15, KL

THE National Higher Education Fund

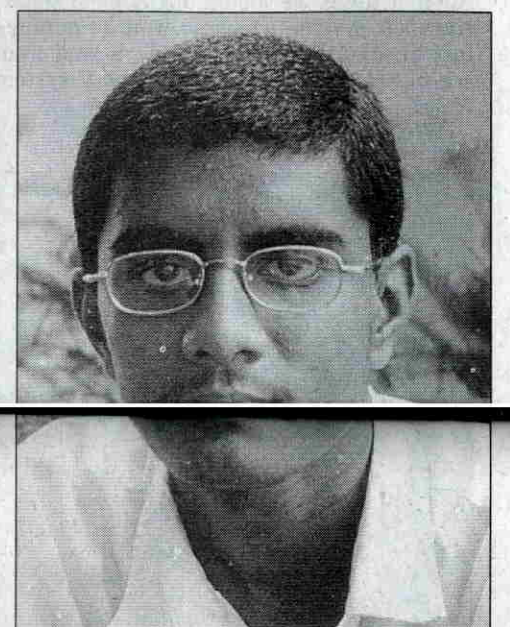


PERRY DANNY RODRIGUES

Corporation (PTPTN) loan scheme that was introduced during Dr Mahathir's tenure as Prime Minister certainly enabled more young Malaysians to enter university. The reduction in the interest rate announced recently was also welcome. Maybe, one day, we won't have to pay any interest at all!

— Amy Miranda, 20, Seremban

THANKS for bringing F1 to Malaysia. The



VICKNESHWARAN NADARAJA

Selangor F1 circuit has not only made it more convenient for Malaysian fans to catch the action in person, but it has also brought in the international crowd. It will also inspire more young Malaysians to venture into motorsports. Who knows? Our very own F1 champion could be a toddler sitting in the stands right now.

— Perry Danny Rodrigues, 16, KL

THE Petronas Twin Towers brought Malaysia to the world and the world to Malaysia. Foreigners I have met in online chatrooms can seldom put our country on the map but with the Twin Towers, they now can. At least now, most of them won't think we still live on trees or that Malaysia is in the Middle East!

— Vickneshwaran Nadaraja, 17, Cheras

IMPORTED cars are so expensive nowadays. If it weren't for Proton and Perodua, I think many college-going youths would have to wait until they're working to be able to afford a car of their own. Many thought Malaysia wasn't ready to have her own national car, but I think it was a wise decision. I mean, there might have been problems with the quality control of our local cars in the beginning, but hiccups are unavoidable. We learn from our mistakes, and try to improve as time goes by.

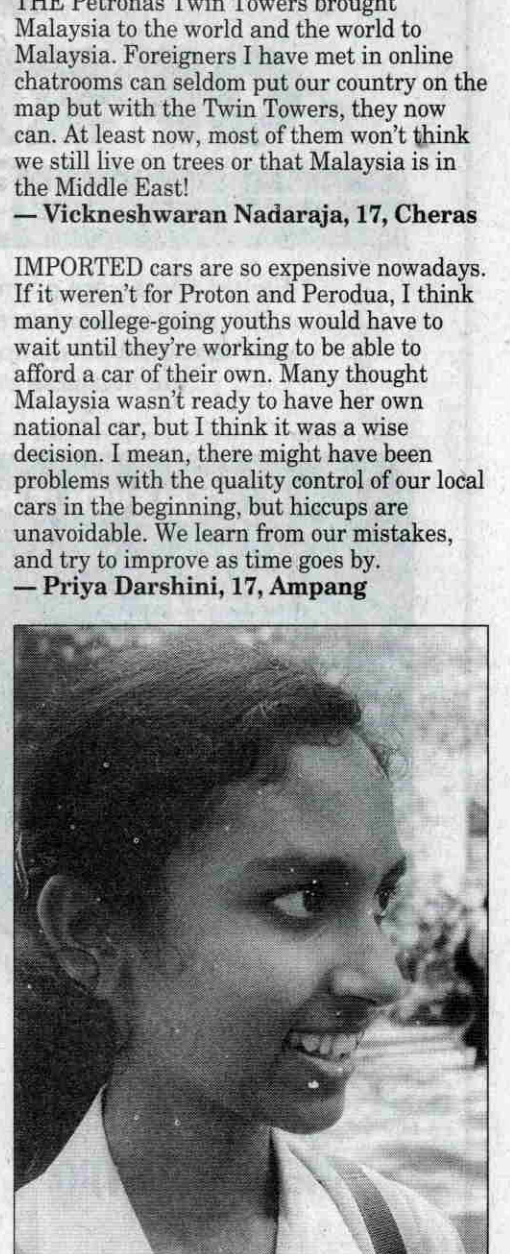
— Priya Darshini, 17, Ampang



PUTRAJAYA: Impressive administrative centre of the Federal Government



PETRONAS TWIN TOWERS: Rising to a majestic 452m, this is a landmark of modern Malaysia



PRIYA DARSHINI