

## **I cried because I'd have to rely on my successors, Dr M says of tearful resignation**

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**By Mayuri Mei Lin**

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 10 — Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said he shed tears when announcing his intentions to step down as the prime minister because it meant that he would have to allow others to run the country.

Dr Mahathir said his rare show of emotion back in 2002 during the Umno general assembly then, was prompted by the knowledge that he would no longer have the power to see his plans come to fruition as he once did as prime minister.

“For 22 years I was able to do what I set out to do. I knew exactly that when I stopped becoming prime minister, all those things that I could do, I would not be able to do.

“I would have to depend on others and I don't know what the others would do and because of that, I cried,” he said in jest during the 11th Malaysia Festival of the Mind at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman Sungai Long campus.

His statement drew laughter and applause from the 200-strong audience consisting of students and academics.

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He went on to say that after having celebrated his 90th birthday last month and reflecting on his resignation, he concluded that his decision was intended to make way for the younger generation of leaders.

He added that he also hoped the youth would practice their democratic right to elect someone who they felt was worthy to be their leader or to remove someone from office if they felt was not performing.

“But this is democratic country people should choose leaders well and make use of system and remove leaders who don't perform,” he said.

On June 22, 2002, Dr Mahathir dropped a bombshell during a three-day Umno general assembly conference by announcing that he was resigning from all his party and government positions with immediate effect.

His emotional announcement saw senior Umno officials surround him on stage during his announcement, in attempt to convince him to reconsider his resignation.

Dr Mahathir later decided that he would stay on as prime minister and president of Umno until October 2003, before handing over power to Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

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