

# State leaders share memories of Dr Mahathir

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## Father, teacher and adviser rolled into one



DATUK Seri Adnan Yaakob, who became Pahang Menteri Besar in 1999, described meeting Dr Mahathir as having "a three-in-one experience" as it was like meeting a father, a teacher and adviser.

Adnan also said one thing which he had picked up from Dr Mahathir was on the economic matters.

"I have managed to understand some basic knowledge of economics and current issues through reading a lot of the Prime Minister's speeches.

## Instant backing for programme



JOHOR Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Chani Othman recalled the day he first attended the Cabinet meeting as Youth and Sports Minister when Dr Mahathir instructed him to tackle the *lepak* culture.

"It took me nearly six months to come out with the Rakan Muda programme.

"But it took him less than an hour to give his approval and on top of that he wanted it to be implemented on a large scale.

## Three key points to remember



MALACCA Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam will always remember three key advice given to him by Dr Mahathir.

"First, he briefed me about the Federal Government's policy. Secondly, he advised me on the proper way to spend money.

"Finally, he said to me 'Don't get involved in scandals or unnecessarily with women.'" Mohd Ali remarked with a smile.

## A cheerful and motivating presence



PERLIS Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim regards every moment spent with Dr Mahathir as a "most memorable" occasion.

"Even during the 1987 Umno crisis, he always seemed cheerful, always motivating us," he said.

"Even in his younger days, his mere presence was captivating enough as Dr Mahathir had the ability to win people over."

## Pillar of strength for Sarawak's growth



SARAWAK Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr George Chan Hong Nam said Dr Mahathir had played a pivotal role in assisting the state government to overcome poverty.

"Dr Mahathir had approved a tremendous amount of financial allocations to Sarawak to implement many vital projects.

"His understanding and support for our development plans had gone a long way in helping Sarawak out of poverty and into the mainstream of development," he said.

## Riding up a mountain in an open cage



KEDAH Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain recalled a "memorable" ride he had with Dr Mahathir in an open cage travelling up the 708m Gunung Machinchang in Langkawi two years ago.

"Just imagine taking a 2km ride up the mountain in an open-top cage," said Syed Razak, who accompanied Dr Mahathir and several other officials in the ride.

He said the cage was actually used to fetch workers, goods and food up.

## 'Simple, outspoken and humble man'



TAN Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad recalled that he and Dr Mahathir had always been able to share jokes.

"We used to share many light moments. When he was here, I would crack a joke or two. He would laugh and so would I. We used to talk and joke a lot during the earlier days," said Isa.

"Now that he has chosen to retire, the state and the people wish him a happy retirement."

## Special thank you from Sabah Umno



SABAH Chief Minister Datuk Musa Aman said Dr Mahathir was a key figure in setting the state on a new political and economic direction.

"We are grateful to Dr Mahathir for the special attention he has given us.

"We will name the new Umno building in the state after Dr Mahathir as a fitting tribute to him."

## An inspiring pat on the back



"KEEP up the good work" – those were the encouraging words from Dr Mahathir which inspired Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

Dr Koh said the incident happened after he had acted as interpreter for his father, the late Datuk Koh Pen Ting and Dr Mahathir in 1978.

"He gave me a big pat on the shoulder and told me to keep up the good work," Dr Koh added.

## A 'firm, cautious and prudent planner'



PERAK Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamad Tajul Rosli Ghazali admires Dr Mahathir for planning his own retirement at the height of his popularity.

"I am impressed and proud of him for making this move.

Recalling the time when he worked as Deputy Home Minister under Dr Mahathir, Tajul Rosli said his boss was a firm, cautious and prudent person.

## An embarrassing encounter at the airport for newly-appointed Selangor Menteri Besar



DATUK Seri Dr Mohamad Khir Toyo said he would never forget his face-to-face encounter with Dr Mahathir, which took place at the KL International Airport in August 2000 a few days after he was named the new Menteri Besar of Selangor replacing Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar.

Dr Khir said the encounter was also an embarrassing episode for him because the Prime Minister

had no inkling of what he looked like.

Relating the incident, Dr Khir said he went to the airport to greet Dr Mahathir, who was returning from an overseas trip, and only after he shook hands and introduced himself did the Prime Minister quip: "So this is the new Menteri Besar!"

"This was a strange event for me because Dr Mahathir appointed me

as Menteri Besar without knowing what I looked like but yet he had faith in a newcomer like me," said Dr Khir.

Dr Khir said he also remembered vividly the first time he shook hands with Dr Mahathir almost 20 years ago when as a student he met the Prime Minister when the latter made an official visit to Tanjung Karang.

"My mother woke me up at

around 5am that day and told me to have my bath as I would have to line up in the streets early in order to get a chance to greet Dr Mahathir," said Dr Khir.

Dr Khir said he had never in his widest dream imagined that his next handshake 17 years later with the leader he admired way back as a student would end up as one between a Prime Minister and Menteri Besar.