

Birthday bash for Tun Dr Mahathir

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KUALA LUMPUR: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who was treated to a belated 80th birthday bash last night, said his wish was to “still be around next year.”

“I hope next year I will still be around. For the country, I pray that it will continue to prosper,” he told reporters at the Putra World Trade Centre last night.

The birthday do was organised by the 80 Pertubuhan Rakyat Malaysia and attended by about 1,000 guests and VIPs including former Cabinet ministers who had served under him such as Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik, Tan Sri Lim Ah Lek, Tan Sri Sabaruddin Chik, Datuk Seri Law Hieng Ding, Tun Ghafar Baba, and Tan Sri Leo Moggie as well as former Philippine president Fidel Ramos.



Dr Ling, in his speech, described how Dr Mahathir had guided his Cabinet ministers.

“When he saw his ministers walking the correct way, he encouraged, pushed and nudged them. When they walked the wrong way, he guided them, and if he suspected the ministers were being tempted, he removed those temptations,” Dr Ling said to laughter from the crowd.

Composer Datuk Wah Idris, accompanied by students from Garden International School and Sekolah Sri Garden, performed *Colours of a Million Memories*, which he wrote for Dr Mahathir, depicting the spectrum of his journey for the past 80 years.

Dr Mahathir, his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and the guests were also entertained by Sheila Majid, Ramli Sarip, Puan Sri Chelsea Cheng and Datuk Yusni Hamid.

A video clip featuring birthday wishes from people of all races throughout the country was also shown. The birthday boy also sang his favourite song, *Return to Sorento*, while his wife dedicated *Always* to her husband of 49 years.

The couple cut a birthday cake each (Dr Siti Hasmah celebrated her 79th birthday recently) and fed each other *pulut kuning* cake. Dr Mahathir said he was touched by, and very happy with the celebration, although his actual date of birth was July 10. In his usual witty self, he told the guests that as he was only used to making political speeches. Thus, he would not make a long birthday speech. He also received gifts from a group comprising eight major Chinese youth organisations and the National Service Training Department.