



Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad

Here I am going to present former Malaysian president Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad a living icon of the present world. In early life of his political career he was a successful Minister of Education as well as then Minister of Trade and Industry (1978–1981). At the age of 56 he was sworn in as Prime Minister on 16 July 1981.

In 1991 he announced the vision 2020, under which Malaysia would become a fully developed country within 30 years. From the Malaysian New Economic Policy in 1990 he got the opportunity to make an effective outline of his economic vision for Malaysia. The NDP achieved success out one of its main aims, poverty reduction. By 1995, less than nine per cent of Malaysians lived in poverty and income inequality had narrowed. Mahathir's government cut corporate taxes and liberalized financial regulations to attract foreign investment. The economy grew by over nine per cent per annum until 1997 prompting other developing countries to try to emulate Mahathir's policies.

Mahathir initiated a series of major infrastructure projects in the 1990s. One of the largest was the Multimedia Super corridor, an area south of Kuala Lumpur, in the mould of Silicon Valle, designed to cater for the information technology industry. Other Mahathir projects included the development of Putrajaya as the home of Malaysia's public service, and bringing a Formula One Grand Prix to Sepang. The ambitious hydro-electric project was intended to carry electricity across the South China to satisfy electricity demand in peninsular Malaysia. Rising living standards, together with Dr. Mahathir's showpiece buildings and outspoken defense of Malaysia's interests, contributed to a sense of national identity, pride and confidence that had not existed before. He put Malaysia on the map, and most Malaysians were pleased about it.

For his efforts to promote the economic development of the country, Mahathir has been granted as the Father of Modernization. In 2002, Mahathir announced that he would resign as prime minister, only for supporters to rush to the stage and convince him tearfully to remain. Having spent over 22 years in office, Mahathir was the world's longest-serving elected leader when he retire. He remains Malaysia's longest-serving prime minister.