

22 MAY 1997

Asia-Power

DR MAHATHIR IS SECOND MOST POWERFUL MAN IN ASIA- ASIAWEEK

By: Tan Hock Guan

SINGAPORE, May 22 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is stronger than ever says Asiaweek and has moved him up to number two in its list of 50 most powerful individuals in Asia.

Dr Mahathir was ranked fourth in the inaugural 1996 Asiaweek Power 50 - an annual ranking of Asia's 50 most powerful and influential people.

Asia's most powerful individual this year is Chinese President Jiang Zemin, who was ranked second last year, while 1996's number one -- President Suharto of Indonesia -- is number three in 1997.

Others in the top 10 are Rupert Murdoch (Chairman and CEO of News Corp.) number four, Chinese Vice-Premier Zhu Rongji number five, Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto six, Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui seven, Liem Sioe Liong (Chairman of Salim Group) eight, Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej nine and Brunei Sultan and Prime Minister Hassanal Bolkiah at number 10.

The Power 50 ranking for 1997 is detailed in the May 30th edition of Asiaweek, the Hong Kong based weekly. Asiaweek, founded in 1975, has Time Warner as its parent company.

Asiaweek Assistant Managing Editor Ricardo Saludo told reporters here today that Dr Mahathir was now "arguably the most prominent spokesman for Asia and the developing world".

"At the same time, Mahathir's vision continues to guide Malaysia, now toward a high-tech future," he said. A simultaneous press conference was held in Hong Kong to highlight the Asiaweek Power 50.

Saludo said in choosing and ranking the Power 50, Asiaweek looked at four major kinds of power - political power, economic power, religion and the clout of coercive force, whether exercised by legitimate armed forces or crime syndicates.

For these, he said for the second year in a row in the Power 50 were the chief of the People's Liberation Army, General Staff Zhang Wannian and the Dragon Head of the Sun Yee On triad in Hong Kong.

Of the Power 50, 23 are political leaders, 16 tycoons and CEOs, four religious leaders, three economic policy makers, two royalties, one military commander and one crime boss.

Four Malaysians are in the Power 50, compared to Japan with the most at seven, China five and Indonesia five.

Apart from Dr Mahathir, Malaysia's hotel and property tycoon Robert Kuok Hock Nien is at number 13 (15 in 1996), businessman and UMNO treasurer Tun Daim Zainuddin is at number 32 (31 in 1996) and Acting Prime Minister and Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is at number 34 (41 in 1996).

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