

29 JUN 1999

Africa-Mahathir

AFRICAN MEDIA AMAZED WITH POLITICAL STABILITY, PRAISES MAHATHIR

PUTRAJAYA, June 29 (Bernama) -- Senior news editors from several African countries today found out for themselves the actual political and economic situation in the country and not the "riot-torn Malaysia" as portrayed by some international media.

After seeing and listening to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for nearly two hours on the country's political situation and the economic recovery plan and policies, they were convinced that Malaysia is peaceful and united.

Some of them said they saw on CNN the riots in Kuala Lumpur following the sacking of former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim last September.

The briefing held at the Prime Minister's Department here, was also attended by officials from the department.

The editors praised the prime minister for his ability to maintain political stability and putting the economy back on track.

"Malaysia is a fine example for the world," said Chris Jacobie who acted as the spokesman for the 18 journalists who arrived here last Sunday.

He said before they came to Malaysia, they were under the impression that all was not right in the country.

"Now we know," said Jacobie, the executive editor of "Republiken" in Namibia.

He said they were very excited to have learned a lot about Malaysia from the prime minister himself.

"Dr Mahathir was willing to share with us some of his ideas and achievements," he said.

Jacobie said Dr Mahathir should not worry much about the criticisms levelled against him and Malaysia by the international media "because Malaysia is already successful."

"It (the criticisms) is not a big deal," he said.

He also praised the religious tolerance practised by the various races in the country.

For Naim Niko, the deputy business editor of Daily Nation in Kenya, Malaysia has achieved tremendous progress.

"I am so impressed by your prime minister. It is so rare that you get such an articulate leader," he said.

Describing Dr Mahathir as a forthright and honest person, Niko said he wished that African leaders had the qualities of Dr Mahathir.

"What we have seen in Malaysia is really a showcase for African countries," he added.

--BERNAMA

es abg