

11 FEB 1999

Mahathir-Speech

DR MAHATHIR'S FIERY SPEECH STIRS UP G15 SUMMIT

By: Kuah Guan Oo

MONTEGO BAY, Jamaica, Feb 11 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has impressed the delegates and audience at the opening of the G15 summit here Wednesday with his views on the causes of the current world economic and financial woes.

"He is very impressive," was a common comment by delegates and officials alike, not to mention the corps of newsmen who scrambled for the text of his address.

Dr Mahathir spoke as the representative for the Asian members of the 17-member organisation.

"I have not heard him before but now I know why people are paying attention to him," said a member of the Jamaican Chamber of Commerce, who attended the opening ceremony of the three-day summit.

A liaison officer of the Peru delegation said she was very impressed because "he has the guts to say what he feels."

There was also a lot of requests for interviews with Dr Mahathir from the journalists who scrambled for the prime minister's text of speech.

"He is certainly the man of the hour," said the Kingston-based correspondent of the Caribbean News Agency, Garfield Myers.

He said he admired Dr Mahathir for the courage to speak the truth.

Managing editor of the Cairo-based Middle East News Agency, Mrs Layla Mohamed Abdel-Gawad was all praise for the Malaysian leader whom she heard for the first time during the special G15 summit in Cairo in May last year.

"He speaks the truth," said Layla who has 36 years of journalistic experience under her belt.

Girish Nikam, special correspondent of the Newstime of India, said Dr Mahathir was certainly the best speaker of the day and reckoned that the Indian media would cover extensively what the Malaysian premier said about Communism and the new capitalism.

To most of the newsmen this writer spoke to, Dr Mahathir's speech was their story of the day.

-- BERNAMA

KGO RN