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Indon-Mahathir

INDON MAGAZINE CALLS DR MAHATHIR WEF HERO

JAKARTA, Feb 12 (Bernama) -- An Indonesian weekly magazine has called Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed a hero of last month's 1999 World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting in Davos, Switzerland.

He merited the accolade for outstanding performance at the WEF meeting, the Panji Masyarakat said in an article titled "Khabar Baik Dari Jiran" (good news from the neighbour).

In the article, Panji Masyarakat, which claimed to have a circulation of 60,000, asked who among the world leaders at the meeting, deserved to be called a hero.

World figures who attended the meeting included South African president Nelson Mandela, United Nations secretary-general Kofi Annan and controversial international financier George Soros, whom Dr Mahathir had often openly referred to as a rogue speculator.

"They may be the stars of the forum, but not the hero. The hero is none other than PM Dr Mahathir," according to the article in the magazine's latest edition.

It said these luminaries might appear to have outshone Dr Mahathir, but on the quiet he stood as a hero, in particular for countries besieged by the current financial crisis, said the magazine.

At the recent WEF meeting, Dr Mahathir, whom the Indonesian media had once nicknamed "little Sukarno", again called for regulations to check excessive currency speculation, the article said.

Dr Mahathir also suggested at the forum that governments incapable of penalising greedy currency speculators should resign.

Alongside the three-paged article analysing the regional financial crisis which had badly beleaguered Indonesia and Thailand in particular, is a side bar piece -- "Krisis apa?" (what crisis?).

The piece commended measures adopted by Malaysia to revitalise her economy and insulate the ringgit from market uncertainties and these steps, it said, were working.

This made the country appear as if it was not at all affected by the economic problems as her people were still able to continue leading a normal life, it said.

The "Panji Masyarakat" was founded by Indonesia's renown Islamic scholar the late Haji Abdul Malik Kari Amrullah or Pak Hamka in the early 1960s.

-- BERNAMA

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