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Singapore-Mahathir

SINGAPORE NEWSPAPERS FRONTPAGE MAHATHIR'S CRITICISM

SINGAPORE, June 20 (Bernama) -- Singapore's newspapers today frontpaged Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad slamming an editorial by the republic's Business Times for suggesting that Malaysia would be better off with a new team in the next millennium.

The English-language newspaper Sunday Times and Malay-language Berita Minggu reported extensively Dr Mahathir's criticism of the editorial on Friday which also said that Malaysia's ruling coalition, Barisan Nasional had "very low propensity for renewal".

BT, which is not published on Sunday, also said "things cannot bode well for its future" if Umno has to look back to Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah or Tan Sri Musa Hitam for the party leadership.

Musa was formerly deputy prime minister and Umno deputy president and Tengku Razaleigh, a former party vice-president.

Blaring the headlines "Mahathir lambasts BT for editorial", the Sunday Times highlighted Dr Mahathir's criticism of the Singapore media for "having a habit of passing nasty comments."

It also carried similar-veined reactions from Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar and Umno Youth acting chief Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein.

Excerpts from a stinging editorial from Malaysia's own Business Times picked up by Reuters was published with the newspaper describing its Singapore's namesake as "hypocritical", noting that Singapore's now Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew had been prime minister for 31 years, longer than Dr Mahathir's 18 years.

"Perhaps, the Singapore Business Times was trying to tell Malaysians not to make the same mistake that Singaporeans did in this department," said the Malaysian Business Times.

The Berita Minggu carried a headline similar to the Sunday Times, "Mahathir Bidas Akhbar Singapura" (Mahathir slams Singapore newspaper).

All of Singapore's eight daily newspapers belong to the same company, Singapore Press Holdings, generally seen to be linked closely to the government.

-- BERNAMA

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