

# Asiaweek portrays PM as a 'tired old man'

Interview and choice of photo deliberate, says Mahathir

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**PUTRAJAYA, Thurs:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today an *Asiaweek* interview which described him as "worn down" by criticisms against him was deliberately done.

He also expressed displeasure over the selection of his photos used by the weekly in its Jan 26 edition that portrayed him as a "tired old man".

"I'm 75 years old! I'm going to run a race with any 75-year-old and see who wins. Anybody would look tired if he has to work. I work almost 24 hours a day, I rest very little," he said.

"I can't do any work in my office because so many people come to see me. When I go home, I sit down and write my letters, features and other correspondence.

"You work, of course sometimes you look tired, but to find the picture that makes you look as if you are an idiot, I think that is deliber-

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ately done."

Speaking to reporters after the declaration of Putrajaya as a Federal Territory, Mahathir said the interview did injustice to him as it was a deliberate act.

"It was deliberate. They were so very friendly that I was taken in by them. They were smiling, talking nicely to me, even got me to come down from my office to take my photo," he said.

"They must have taken at least 200 photographs but they choose the right photo for that."

Asked about his reply "I don't care" to the question in the interview on how he would like to be remembered, Mahathir said: "That is true, I really don't care."

He likened the situation to the case of Lawrence of Arabia, who was a great hero, but when somebody debunked everything, things changed.

"It is going to happen. It does not matter. What matters to me is what I've done. If people recognise it, okay, if they don't, it's also okay. Whatever they can say about me, I won't be around, I'll be hovering up there looking down."