

22 JUN 2001

Indon-Mahathir

DR MAHATHIR'S SPEECH GETS ATTENTION OF INDON DAILIES

By: Openg Onn

JAKARTA, June 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's policy speech, delivered at the opening of the Umno general meeting in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, received prominent play-up in national dailies here today.

Almost all major newspapers carried Dr Mahathir's hard hitting speech either on the front or inside pages besides carrying photographs of Umno members watching the Prime Minister on the giant screen outside the meeting hall.

Most of the newspapers carried articles on Dr Mahathir's speech, released by foreign news agencies, who have been accused of unfair news coverage of Malaysia by the Prime Minister on several occasions.

"Kompas" carried a front page news on Dr Mahathir compiled from three foreign news agencies, the Associated French Press, Reuters and Associated Press, headlined "Mahathir Criticises Opposition and Foreign Countries".

The lengthy reports highlighted Dr Mahathir's accusation that Western countries were making use of the country's opposition parties to topple the government.

The headline story on the front page of Indonesia's English daily, "The Jakarta Post" read, "Mahathir Launches Attack on Foreigners, Opposition".

Well established daily, "Koran Tempo", the upshot of a popular local weekly magazine "Tempo", carried a 10-paragraph article on page two of its newspaper under the headlines, "Mahathir: Umno Will Become A Minority".

"Republika" another influential and widely read daily placed the article on Dr Mahathir's speech as the second headline story in its international page. But the headline which read, "Little Soekarno Lambasts the West" was no doubt an eye-catcher and highlighted Dr Mahathir's stinging criticism against Western countries.

The Indonesian press had some years back dubbed Dr Mahathir as Little Sukarno, after Indonesia's founding President, the late Sukarno, who was also resentful of Western powers.

Dr Mahathir's speech, which also made reference to Indonesia's "reformasi" which had failed to bring about desired changes but instead produced mob rule, was also highlighted by the newspapers without being slashed by the respective editors.

-- BERNAMA

OPP AHH DVS