

South China Morning Post praises Dr Mahathir

HONG KONG: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad received a rare positive assessment in terms of his performance and power by the South China Morning Post, which has often been critical of him.

In an article written by the newspaper's Foreign Editor Peter Kammerer, the newspaper acknowledged that Dr Mahathir had beaten his critics, cynics and economists.

"Radical economic measures in 1998 appear to have paid off. Malaysia ended last year with an estimated zero growth rate - commendable in tough times when much of the region saw negative growth," Kammerer said in his article which was the page lead of the newspaper's first foreign page.

The article also said that there were no serious challenges against him since the public was losing interest in the Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim issue and was rejecting PAS' "fundamentalist" policies.

In the same article, former Parti Keadilan Nasional deputy president Dr Chandra Muzaffar said his former party made the mistake of making Anwar the focus of its attention.

"You can't base a movement on a personality because if you fail to transcend personality it degenerates into a cult rather than a serious movement for change," said Dr Chandra.

The newspaper in its Business section also highlighted Dr Mahathir's view on the dropping Japanese yen.