

03 NOV 2003

Mahathir-Accolades

DR MAHATHIR CONTINUES TO WIN ACCOLADES

From Mahesh Prasad

NEW DELHI, Nov 3 (Bernama) -- For the fourth day in succession and three days after he handed over power to Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the Malaysian leader, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad continues to win accolades in Indian media.

The leading business daily, Economic Times, carried an article today by Wan Gungwu saying Dr Mahathir "...became a leading Asian moderniser. He quickly took up a decisive constitutional battle against the hereditary Malay rulers, the nine Sultans and succeeded in curtailing their privileges and powers."

Having overcome the inertia of communal suspicion and dynastic traditions, Dr Mahathir was able to drive the country onto a course of rapid industrialisation.

Initially, says the author, "his ambitious plans to make Malaysia an economic model for developing nations exposed him to both ridicule and admiration.

"Many thought that he was moving too far, too fast; that he was expecting too much from Malays asked to make the cultural quantum leap from village to boardroom in a generation.

"But he was determined to break the traditional Malay mould and succeeded in building a new - albeit still small - urban middle class."

Dr Mahathir, said Wan Gungwu in a three column spread article entitled "The man, who made Malaysia" appears "to have been spurred on by the success of neighbouring island-state of Singapore, briefly a part of Malaysia, on its swift march to first world status." The article carries a caricature of Dr Mahathir.

The author concludes by saying "The competitive approach towards Singapore is in line with the concerns he expressed in his influential book, The Malay Dilemma.

"The goal is still to build a Malaysia where Malays will always lead non-Malay minorities in shaping the country's future. That, perhaps is the greatest continuity of all in Malaysia's legacy of generational rulers."

-- BERNAMA

MP AHH ABG