

**Indonesia Pressmen Wish To Interview Dr Mahathir
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From Fadzli Ramli**

MEDAN, May 28 (Bernama) -- Impressed with the achievements of Malaysia's fourth prime minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Indonesian journalists met by Bernama during the National Information Group and National Information Centre 2013 visit programme expressed their ambition of interviewing Malaysia's Father of Development.

A reporter from Sin Chiew Daily Indonesia, Fitrianto said although Malaysia was a small country compared to Indonesia, Dr Mahathir had succeeded in turning Malaysia into a nation that had commanded the respect of the world.

"I wish to know the recipe used by Mahathir in transforming Malaysia from an agricultural country into a modern industrialised nation.

"For more than 20 years Mahathir had administered the country and he was loved by Malaysians," he told Bernama.

The six-day 'Kelompok Informasi Nasional' (KIM) visit programme which began on May 21 and the 'Pekan Informasi Nasional 2013' last Saturday were participated by three Malaysian journalists, three Indonesian journalists and a Brunei journalist besides receiving coverage from the local media.

Fitrianto was attracted to Tun Dr Mahathir's firmness in tackling the various issues and ensuring that Malaysia was not belittled by others who wished to 'fish in troubled waters'.

"Like (former and late) President Suharto, Mahathir has a peculiar firmness 'to get the job done'. However, besides the firmness there was 'softness' in several matters such as the Indonesia-Malaysia relations where there was a 'give and take' attitude between the two friendly nations," he said.

He said there were talks in Indonesia that Dr Mahathir possessed a very firm character to the extent that some had labelled him as cruel, but for Fitrianto this was merely a political game.

A journalist with Koran Sindo, Erdian Wirajaya said the firmness was not a weakness for Dr Mahathir because this element had led to the rapid development of Malaysia.

"There is no point in the leader being soft merely to be popular with the people if no development could take place in the country. From Dr Mahathir's blog (chedet.cc) I had gathered the style of thinking of the Malaysian statesman.

"I would like to interview Mahathir to find out in greater detail about his thinking. Like his blog on issues involving the younger generation such as university students, his writings had been soft but critical. But on problems such as the Israeli issue, he was very firm," he said.

Erdian said Dr Mahathir's firmness on the Israeli issue had demonstrated the courage of the statesman, who was not afraid to say what was right.

Citra Indonesia journalist, Edy Santoso wanted to interview Dr Mahathir to find out the story concerning the claims by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim on various issues involving Malaysia.

"As journalists and for the sake of journalistic ethics, we must know the story from both sides instead of taking from one side and forming our own conclusion. I want to know the story from Mahathir himself," he said.

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