

Several foreign newspapers sing praises of Dr Mahathir

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PETALING JAYA: Several foreign newspapers sang praises of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad in their editorials, commending him for transforming Malaysia to the economic success it is today.

Singapore's *The Straits Times* in its editorial said that it would be difficult to imagine the world stage without Dr Mahathir's larger-than-life presence, which had garnered him both admirers and critics, from every corner of the globe.

It said Singaporeans, would have to get used to the idea of not having Dr Mahathir around as Malaysia's top executive and added that it was certain that

the 77-year-old statesman "would not simply fade away in Langkawi to write his memoirs".

The editorial also said Dr Mahathir's leadership had prepared Malaysia to undergo a dynamic industrial transition with the country poised for bigger things in the near future.

The *Jakarta Post*, in its editorial, said that Dr Mahathir's handing over the baton to Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is proof that it is politically viable for a non-Western country to manage an orderly succession, without resorting to street demonstrations or military coups.

In this regard, Malaysia has shown itself to be better than Indonesia, which failed to accomplish a normal succession, although the Suharto regime had been showing serious indications of political decay in the early 1990s, added the editorial.

It also said that Dr Mahathir's leadership had successfully enhanced Malaysia's economic and financial prowess as well as improved the lot of the Malays and other Malaysians.

It suggested that Dr Mahathir devote his retirement in setting up a Mahathir Mohamad Centre to allow the crème of the Islamic world to hold discus-

sions in an atmosphere of friendship and brotherhood.

British newspaper *The Guardian*, in its editorial continued to harp over Dr Mahathir's statement in the recent OIC summit in Putrajaya that the Jews ruled the world by proxy. It added that it was unfortunate that Dr Mahathir's retirement was mired in controversy due to that statement.

The editorial also said that Dr Mahathir's 22 years as Malaysia's prime minister saw him standing up for the Malays, Malaysia, Muslims and other developing nations as well as speaking up against the negative forces of globalisation, the

colonialist mentality and unequal, western-dictated financial and market structures.

This stance, it added, was laudable as it turned Malaysia into an economic success story with the nation now being one of the world's top 20 trading nations.

The Dr Mahathir era also showed how a multi-faith country with a Muslim majority and a Malay-Chinese-Indian ethnic divide could build relatively harmonious social structures, it said.

Dr Mahathir has also shown the world that it is possible for a poor country to progress without sacrificing its identity and

cultural values. His sense of mission was strong; in many ways, he worked wonders, said the editorial.

Yet his achievements were often diminished by his methods and overshadowed by his robustly provocative views, views that were interpreted, sometimes too simply, as anti-western although there was usually an element of cool, domestic political calculation in whatever Dr Mahathir said, added *The Guardian*.

The editorial concluded that Dr Mahathir was a complex man and that his energy and vision, but not his diatribes, would be missed.