

84 P

KUALA LUMPUR, FEB. 11 (BERNAMA) -- MALAYSIANS SHOULD TAKE A LOOK AT THE COUNTRY'S HISTORICAL PAST AS A BASIS OF COMPARISON FOR TODAY'S ACHIEVEMENTS, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR HOHAHAD SAID TODAY.

THE FUNCTION OF HISTORY WAS NOT TO PROMOTE ADULATION OF FORMER-**HEROES** BUT TO SHOW WHERE MISTAKES HAD BEEN MADE FOR REMEDIAL ACTION HE ADDED.

HE WAS SPEAKING AT THE PRESENTATION OF PRIZES TO WINNERS OF THE HISTORY ESSAY AND PAINTING **COMPETITION ORGANIZED BY THE MALAYSIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY AT THE DEWAN BAHASA DAN PUSTAKA** HERE.

HE SAID ONE OF THE LESSONS OF HISTORY WAS THAT SOCIETY WOULD RISE OR FALL ACCORDING TO ITS MERITS.

"THIS MEANS THAT IF WE ARE LAZY AND IRRESPONSIBLE WE WILL EXPERIENCE THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF THESE WHILE IF WE ARE HARDWORKING WE WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS QUALITY."

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR CAUTIONED THE PEOPLE AGAINST BEING WRAPPED UP BY PAST GLORY, POINTING OUT THAT A SOCIETY DWELLING ON ITS FORMER GLORY WAS ONE THAT HAD LOST ITS GREATNESS AND HAD NOTHING ELSE TO BE PROUD OF EXCEPT ITS HISTORY.

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HE SAID PEOPLE, IN LOOKING FOR "HEROES" IN THE COUNTRY'S PAST, SOMETIMES DID NOT QUESTION THE **DUBIOUS** QUALITIES OF THE "HERO" AND OVER LOOKED HIS FAILINGS IN THEIR ADORATION OF HIM.

"WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS OUR ACHIEVEMENTS TODAY. CAN WE BE PROUD OF WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED SO FAR?" HE ASKED.

"IF NOT, SHOULD WE STILL CONTINUE WITH OUR ROMANCE WITH THE PAST OR SHOULD WE ATTEMPT TO FIND OUT THE MISTAKES WE MADE AND TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT THEIR RECURRENCE?"

HE URGED THE PEOPLE TO BE OF ONE HEART AND MIND AND DEVOTE THEIR EFFORTS TO STRENGTHENING THE COUNTRY.

"THERE IS NO MEANING IN CHANGING THE SYSTEM IF OLD HABITS THAT ENFEEBLE US ARE STILL RETAINED."

HE STRESSED THAT THERE HAD NEVER BEEN A TIME IN THE COUNTRY'S HISTORY THAT OFFERED SO MANY OPPORTUNITIES AS THE PRESENT AGE.

AFTER A TURBULENT HISTORY OF POWER STRUGGLES THAT PAVED THE WAY FOR BRITISH COLONIZATION, THE COUNTRY WAS NOW UNITED AND INDEPENDENT AND CAPABLE OF DETERMINING ITS FUTURE AND THE PEOPLE'S WELL-BEING.

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THE PEOPLE SHOULD NOW STRIVE TO REINFORCE UNITY, IMPROVE THE ADMINISTRATION AND PLAN AND IMPLEMENT DEVELOPMENT WITH FULL COMMITMENT AND DEDICATION APART FROM MAKING EFFORTS TO OVERCOME WEAKNESSES.

"IF WE LACK KNOWLEDGE WE SHOULD STRIVE TO LEARN, IF WE LACK SKILLS WE SHOULD UNDERGO TRAINING AND IF WE LACK RESOURCES WE SHOULD WORK TO ACHIEVE PROSPERITY," HE ADDED.

DATUK SERP DR MAHATHIR SAID ALL PROBLEMS COULD BE SOLVED AS LONG AS THE PEOPLE REALIZED THE FATE IN STORE FOR THEM IF THEY FAILED TO MAKE GOOD THE LESSONS OF HISTORY.

MALAYSIA COULD TAKE PRIDE IN ITS PROGRESS COMPARED WITH CIVILIZATIONS THAT ROSE ONLY TO FALL SUCH AS CARTHAGE, THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE AND THE INCA, MAJAPAHIT AND MOGHUL EMPIRES.

THE QUESTION TO BE ASKED WAS HOW A CIVILIZATION COULD REACH SUCH HEIGHTS ONLY TO COLLAPSE AND BE SWALLOWED UP BY THE PASSAGE OF TIME.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HISTORY WOULD SHOW THAT GOOD VALUES SUCH AS INDUSTRIOUSNESS, COURAGE, TRUSTWORTHINESS AND SINCERITY AS WELL AS KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS BROUGHT SUCCESS TO NATIONS.

"WHEN THESE QUALITIES HAVE BEEN ASSIMILATED IN THE CULTURE OF A PEOPLE, THE PEOPLE AND THEIR COUNTRY WILL TASTE GLORY. THEIR INFLUENCE WILL GROW AND THEY WILL BE RESPECTED AND HONOURED," HE SAID.

ALSO PRESENT AT THE PRIZE-GIVING CEREMONY WERE EDUCATION MINISTER DATUK DR SULAIMAN DAUD WHO IS ALSO THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY, DEPUTY EDUCATION MINISTER DATUK DR TAN TIONG HONG AND ACTING CHAIRMAN OF THE SOCIETY'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OMAR MOHAMMAD HASHIM.

THE PRIME MINISTER GAVE AWAY THE PRIZES.

ENCLIC BAHARAM AZIZ FROM THE MELAKA EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WON THE FIRST PRIZE OF \$700. -- BERNA, MA 1540/11