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MAHATHIR-NATIONALISM
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KUALA LUMPUR, AUG 16 (BERNAMA) -- WRITERS PLAY A BIG ROLE IN INCULCATING THE SPIRIT OF NATIONALISM AMONG THE PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THE YOUNG, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

ALTHOUGH THE NATIONALISTIC SPIRIT COULD BE NURTURED THROUGH SPEECHES AND LECTURES, WRITERS PLAYED THE MAIN ROLE IN PERPETUATING EVERY VIEW AND OPINION GIVEN IN THEIR WRITINGS, HE SAID WHEN OPENING AN EXHIBITION ON +NATIONALISM IN LITERATURE+ AT MUZIUM NEGARA HERE.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE WORK OF WRITERS WAS MORE THAN JUST TO SEEK A LIVING. IT WAS TO WRITE FOR THE GOOD OF SOCIETY.

+WRITERS SHOULD WRITE WITH THE AIM OF ENCOURAGING NOBLE VALUES LIKE THE NATIONAL SPIRIT IN SOCIETY TO MAKE THE NATION A SUCCESSFUL ONE,+ HE ADDED.

A WRITER WHO WAS TRULY RESPONSIBLE TO SOCIETY SHOULD HELP THE SOCIETY ACHIEVE SUCCESS THROUGH WRITINGS ESPOUSING NOBLE QUALITIES.

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID NATIONAL FEELINGS MUST BE NURTURED AMONG THE YOUNG GENERATION AND NOT ALLOWED TO BE LOST BECAUSE IT BROUGHT BLESSINGS AND HAPPINESS TO SOCIETY.

+HAVING SUCH NOBLE VALUES NOT ONLY BRINGS SUCCESS TO SOCIETY BUT ALSO PROMOTES RELIGIOUS FAITH.

+THE PROGRESS OF A COUNTRY DEPENDS ON ITS VALUES OF LIFE. A COUNTRY MAY NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO MAKE IT RICH BUT BY HAVING ITS OWN VALUE OF LIFE IT CAN STILL GAIN THE RESPECT OF THE WORLD,+ HE ADDED.

THE PRIME MINISTER DREW ATTENTION TO SOCIETY'S APPARENT FEAR OF BEING ACCUSED OF HAVING THE NATIONALISTIC SPIRIT AS IF SUCH FEELINGS WERE DESPICABLE.

SUCH FEELINGS WERE NOT +ALLOWED+ TO GROW IN SOCIETY BY PEOPLE WHO DID NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF VERSES FROM THE QURAN, HE SAID. -- MORE

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A SOCIETY OF QUALITY WAS ONE WHICH HAD LOVE FOR THE NATION AND WAS PREPARED TO DEFEND THE COUNTRY AND ITS CULTURE, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ADDED THAT NATIONALISM INCULCATED AMONG THE PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY DID NOT RELEGATE FEELINGS OF BROTHERHOOD AND RELIGION TO SECOND PLACE.

+THIS IS EVIDENT IN THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY FOR THE ISLAMIC STRUGGLE ANYWHERE AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO GIVE AID TO THEIR BROTHERS OF THE SAME RELIGION.+

HE SAID IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE PEOPLE TO DEFEND THEIR OWN COUNTRY IF THEY DID NOT POSSESS NATIONAL SENTIMENTS BECAUSE SYMPATHY FROM OTHER COUNTRIES WAS NOT ENOUGH TO OVERCOME THE THREATS FACING THE COUNTRY.

ONLY THOSE WITH SHALLOW FEELINGS WOULD NOT APPROVE OF NATIONALISM FOR THEY DID NOT REALISE THAT THIS COUNTRY GAINED ITS INDEPENDENCE BECAUSE OF THE NATIONAL SPIRIT OF ITS SONS, HE ADDED.

-- BERNAMA

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