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MELAKA, AUG 28/ (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD HAS DESCRIBED MELAKA AS A +FORTUNATE STATE+ WHEN IT WAS PICKED BY TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN AS THE PLACE TO ANNOUNCE THE DATE OF MERDEKA.

IN A MESSAGE TO MARK THE OPENING OF THE MERDEKA DECLARATION MEMORIAL HERE, THE PRIME MINISTER ADDS THAT THERE IS NOTHING MORE FITTING TO MARK THE HISTORIC OCCASION THAN A MEMORIAL.

+I CONGRATULATE ALL THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR SERVICES TO THE SUCCESSFUL SETTING UP OF THIS MEMORIAL,+ HE SAYS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR BELIEVES THE MEMORIAL WILL SERVE TO NOT ONLY REMIND THE PEOPLE OF THE HISTORIC EVENTS LEADING UP TO INDEPENDENCE BUT ALSO INSTIL THE SPIRIT OF NATIONALISM IN THE YOUNGER GENERATION.

+THE CHAMPIONS OF INDEPENDENCE HAVE PROVEN THEIR RESOURCEFULNESS IN REDEEMING THE PRESTIGE OF THEIR RELIGION, RACE AND COUNTRY AND IT IS NOW UP TO THE YOUNGER GENERATION TO PRESERVE WHAT HAS BEEN WON,+ HE SAYS. -- MORE

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MEANWHILE, MELAKA CHIEF MINISTER DATUK SERI ABDUL RAHIM THAMBY CHIK IN A MESSAGE IN A SPECIAL ISSUE OF +SUARA MELAKA+ TO MARK THIS YEAR'S NATIONAL DAY SAYS THE MEMORIAL AND THE MERDEKA MEMORIAL LIBRARY IN THE STATE WILL SYMBOLISE THE EFFORTS TO PRESERVE THE HERITAGE OF THE MERDEKA STRUGGLE.

HE SAYS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S AGREEMENT TO SET UP THE MEMORIAL IS A MANIFESTATION OF ITS RECOGNITION OF MELAKA'S ROLE IN THE TASK OF NATION-BUILDING.

THE MEMORIAL, HE SAYS, REFLECTS THE INTEGRITY OF MALAYSIANS AND THE DETERMINATION OF THE NATIONALISTS WHO SECURED INDEPENDENCE WITHOUT BLOODSHED.

DATUK SERI ABDUL RAHIM ADDS THAT THE MEMORIAL DOES NOT BELONG TO MELAKA ALONE BUT TO ALL THE RAKYAT.

THE MEMORIAL WILL BE DEDICATED BY +BAPA KEMERDEKAAN+ (FATHER OF INDEPENDENCE) TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN ON SATURDAY. -- BERNAMA

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