

Nation hails role of artists,^(P) says PM

KUALA LUMPUR: The country recognises and appreciates the role played by artists in nation-building, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

He said they should be happy because the country recognised their efforts and many of their works had been well-received.

"Some of them have become celebrities," he said, adding that artists like Ibrahim Hussein, Hoessin Ennas and Latiff Mohidin had done Malaysia proud.

As for those who have yet to achieve success and fame, he advised them not to give up hope but to continue to face the challenges and to work hard.

Success and recognition did not come easy in whatever field, he said when opening an art exhibition on *Vision*, organised by Yayasan Seni Berdaftar at the PWTC.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysian artists should take pride in producing high quality work instead of feeling dejected just because their pieces could not fetch high prices like those produced by European masters.

"The art works of famous artists such as van Gogh and Rembrandt only became valuable after they were dead," he said.

"The late recognition is due to the fact that people tend to go for things that are limited and hard to find," he said.

He was happy that Yayasan Seni had come out with scholarships to help local artists improve their skills.

On display at the exhibition are the works of Malaysian artists Mutalib Zakaria and Abdul Ghani Ahmad and Jian Hi-Zou from China.

Present were Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Saibaruuddin Chik and Yayasan Seni Berdaftar founder Toh Puan Mahani Idris Daim.