

History 'important reference' for better future

MALACCA Mon. — History is an important point of reference to create a better future for the people, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said history could teach the people not to repeat the mistakes made by previous generations.

Dr Mahathir said the people should not forget that Malacca was colonised following a visit by a small group of Portuguese who came to trade when Malacca was a bustling centre.

"Members of the group were subsequently rounded up when they became a threat to the Sultanate but a bigger and stronger group subsequently came and succeeded in invading Malacca."

The Prime Minister said this when opening the Maritime Museum here, the seventh museum set up by the State Government to boost tourism.

Responding to Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Rahim's speech that there was room for about 100 museums in Malacca, Dr Mahathir joked that "should the idea materialise, there will probably be no space to walk as Malacca is small."

Abdul Rahim also said that museums could become a place of reference for future generations.

"Museums are important not only because they can motivate the people to work harder, but are also a symbol of racial harmony."

The Maritime Museum is in the shape of the *Flor de la Mar* which sunk off the Sumatran coast in the 14th Century. It was carrying loot plundered from the Malacca Sultanate.

The wooden ship museum commonly referred to as a *nau* was built at a cost of RM3.8 million near the mouth of the Malacca River where such vessels used to berth in the days when Malacca was a major trading centre.

Dr Mahathir and his entourage later viewed the ceramics salvaged from the *Dayana* which sunk off Tanjung Ridara near here in 1817.