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(EMBARGO: FOR RELEASE AFTER 10PM TODAY)

Mahathir-Asean

ASEAN'S SUCCESS DRAWS SOME UNWELCOME ATTENTION, SAYS MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, July 22 (Bernama) -- Asean's success seems to have drawn some unwelcome attention and efforts are being made to slow down its development through the imposition of foreign standards, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

The Prime Minister said Asean countries must stand together if they were going to counter this unhealthy move.

"To build a cohesive Asean community, we need not focus on political or military alliances only. Trade and cultural ties can be just as effective in fostering greater Asean solidarity," he said at the 3rd Asean Achievement Award at a hotel here.

"We should therefore work towards becoming economically and technologically a single community, for example by sharing our expertise, experiences and thoughts so that the benefits could be shared between us," he said.

Dr Mahathir said while it was true that the economic performance of the individual Asean countries has been commendable many problems remained unresolved. -- more

▼22/07/20-25MST

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Mahathir-Asean 2 Kuala Lumpur (embargo)

"Pockets of poverty are found in many Asean countries and positive actions must be taken to redress the imbalances between the haves and the many have-nots," he said.

In addition, he said, more attention should be given to improving health care and to raising the educational standards of the peoples, adding that without good health and education progress becomes difficult.

He said the making of an Asean community was a matter which must receive more attention and, towards this end, a variety of programmes, both social and educational, should be developed to forge closer ties between Asean countries.

Asean, he said, must continue to invest in education in a world where new knowledge grew by geometrical progression.

There was less need to go abroad now as the region's educational institutions were more credible and they provided a wider range of courses to choose from, he said. -- more

▼22/07/20-27MST

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Mahathir-Asean 3 Kuala Lumpur (embargo)

"Asean countries should open up their educational institutions to each other," he said.

He said as the private sector would always be the engine of growth it was imperative that it continually initiates ideas, innovations and approaches which could be commercially developed for the mutual benefit of entrepreneurs and consumers in the Asean region.

"Governments can provide the necessary political, security and infrastructure framework but at the end of the day it is the businessmen who have to exploit the commercial opportunities that abound in this region," Dr Mahathir said.

"Our Asian values have been our strength and we should take all possible measures to ensure that these values are deeply ingrained in our society for generations to come," he said.

Without this strong sense of commitment to the community, family and nation, Asean efforts to catch up with the developed nations will end in failure, he added. -- more

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ATTENTION EDITORS: CORRECTION

IN FIRST GRAF PLS DROP THE WORDS .... for the second consecutive year.

CORRECTED RPT

Mahathir-Asean 4 (last) Kuala Lumpur

The award function was hosted by the Asean Business Forum.

Later, Dr Mahathir presented the awards to 10 recipients. They include Public Bank Bhd founder and chief executive officer Tan Sri Dr Teh Hong Piow who was named Asean Businessman of the Year.

Another Malaysian awarded is Dr Gan Yik Yuen in the research and development category.

The award is given to honour outstanding individuals from various disciplines.

The other recipients are Leandro Locsin of the Philippines (architecture), Dr Wiratman Wangsadinata (Indonesia - engineering), Prof Dr Teera Ramasoota (Thailand - medicine), Dr Andy Hor Tzi Sum (Singapore - sciences), Ramon Orlina (Philippines - visual arts), Seree Vangnaitham (Thailand - performing arts), Dr Ee Peng Liang (Singapore - community service) and Susi Susanti (Indonesia - sports). -- Bernama

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