

04 MAY 1996

Mahathir-Poem

PM HAS AUDIENCE SPELLBOUND WITH POEM RECITAL

KUALA LUMPUR, May 4 (Bernama) -- Over the years, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has captivated Malaysians and others with countless speeches which he delivered at home and abroad on just about every subject of interest to people from all walks of life.

But tonight for the first time, he recited a heart-rendering poem which he wrote on a subject which visibly is closest to his heart -- the Malays, their plight during pre-independence days and how the present generation has become complacent in many ways and did not make good the past struggle for independence from the colonial masters.

The poem is entitled "Perjuangan yang Belum Selesai" (An Unfinished Struggle) and he recited it at the fourth Utusan Poetry Night at the Malaysian Tourist Information Centre (Matic) here.

With tears flowing on his cheek, Dr Mahathir had the audience spellbound with the poem which was just as forcefully written as his characteristic speeches -- frank, direct to the point and hard-hitting and yet in simple words whose meanings were unambiguous and unphilosophical.

In his poem, the Prime Minister among other things said: " Di manakah silapnya hingga bangsku berasa begitu kecil dan rendah diri?. Apakah angkara penjajahan? Lalu bangsaku mulai melupakan kegemilangan silam dan sejarah gemilang membina empayar? (Where did we go wrong that my race feels so small and humble? Is this the result of colonialism? So much so that my race begins to forget the glory of the past and the glorious history of empire building?)

He went on to say that the tears they shed and their past history would be meaningless if "my beloved race" (the Malays) are alienated, belittled and forgotten.

The struggle of the Malays, said the Prime Minister, is far from over.

"Only those who are clever and determined will be successful given the many challenges ahead.

The event was held in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of Umno and was organised by Utusan Melayu group with the cooperation of the Culture, Youth and Tourism Ministry and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

Others who recited poems included National Literary Award winner Datuk Noordin Hassan, singer M.Nasir and actresses Haliza Misbun and Aida Rahim.

-- BERNAMA

WE AU SK