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Forum - Mahathir

DR MAHATHIR'S FATHER PLACES IMPORTANCE ON EDUCATION

LANGKAWI, April 5 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's parents place great importance on education as vehicle to success, recalled a former classmate of the Prime Minister.

Osman Abu Bakar said Mohamad Iskandar, Dr Mahathir's father, was strict especially when it comes to education.

Mohamad, the first Malay teacher to be made headmaster of an English school in Alor Setar, made it a point to see that Dr Mahathir and his brother Mashahor revised and did their school work.

"To Pak Mohamad, you will get no where in life without education," he said at a forum on Dr Mahathir's secret to success at the Langkawi Development Authority (Lada) auditorium here, today.

The forum was organised by Galeria Perdana and National Archives of Malaysia. Apart from Osman also invited were Dr Mahathir's sister Hajah Habsah Mohamad Iskandar, another former classmate Haji Hussein Abdul Rahman and a friend Mustafa Ismail.

The session was chaired by former National Archives director-general Datuk Zakiah Hanun Abdul Hamid who is Galeria Perdana advisor.

Osman, 75, said Dr Mahathir and Mashahor learn to read the Quran from Ustaz Zakaria Mohd Nor.

Their father ensured that they spent one hour per day with Ustaz Zakaria after 4pm. If they "tuang", Ustaz Zakaria was told to cane them.

After their Quran lessons, Mohamad would keep over them as they did their school work before teaching them English.

Osman said Dr Mahathir's house was among the few which had power supply and he used to study there too.

Dr Mahathir never played truant, he said, responding to a question from one of the audience, a student.

According to Osman, Dr Mahathir braved challenges and during the Japanese occupation, he even set up a stall together with him to sell cakes and drinks.

Dr Mahathir, affectionately known as Che Det, is a person of discipline. He likes to play rugby apart from cycling and singing.

Dr Mahathir did not believe in wasting time and love carpentry, he said.

Habsah, in her 80's, said Dr Mahathir was interested in learning and would ask questions of what he did not know.

He would also do things which others could not, she said, adding that Dr Mahathir believes in punctuality.

Mustafa Ismail, who came to know Dr Mahathir while trading at Pekan Rabu, said the Prime Minister was interested in business and he was a doctor when he left the government service to set up a Klinik MAHA in Alor Setar.

Mustafa said Dr Mahathir always looked ahead and saw that business is a profitable venture.

He helped set up the Pekan Rabu building in Jalan Tunku Ibrahim, Alor Setar as a place where bumiputeras could ply their trade.

Meanwhile, Kedah State Executive Councillor Datuk Abdullah Hasnan Kamaruddin said the forum should be held in other parts of the country to allow more students to know the background of Malaysia's renowned statesman.

Abdullah Hasnan said Malaysians would then be able to appreciate their

leaders more after knowing their background.

The forum, attended by 400 people, was opened by Lada general-manager
Datuk Abdul Halil Mutalib. -- BERNAMA

ZI ZUL ABG