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Mahathir-Critics

LEADERS SHOULD WELCOME CRITICS, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 4 (Bernama) -- Society and leaders of society should tolerate and welcome critics because without them society can go very wrong, complacent with everything it does, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He says that critics are absolutely necessary for those playing a leading role in society.

"Without criticisms they would not know when they are wrong, and may not even know what is going on around them," he says in his message in a book written by his daughter, Marina, entitled "In Liberal Doses".

Dr Mahathir says however critics can be carried away by their own wisdom or even their own influence and power for critics do have power despite not being officially or legally vested with any authority.

The book, which is a collection of selected articles written by Marina since 1991 for her column "Musings" in the Star newspaper, was launched by Prof Chandra Muzaffar here today. The author's mother, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, was also present.

Dr Mahathir says that critics must always bear in mind that they are often right but not always right and in particular when the criticisms are based on hearsay and are not adequately researched, the hurt they may cause to the subject can be quite painful.

"This will be especially so when for some reason or other the critic is unassailable," he says.

Dr Mahathir says: "We live in an imperfect society and we are all imperfect individuals but this is no excuse for us not to try to be perfect, to do what is right and avoid what is wrong."

"To know when we are right or wrong we need a mirror and the critic holds up the mirror so we may see ourselves, warts and all," he says.

"However, the critics too need to look at the mirror if we accept that none of us are perfect and perhaps when they look at the mirror they would become slightly more tolerant of the faults and foibles of others," says the Prime Minister.

Dr Mahathir says that he used to write occasionally for the press in his younger days for money.

Besides, he also felt the need to criticise the colonial administration which neglected the community, saying that he was too young then to know his own fault and could not understand why the right and the fair things were not done.

On his daughter Marina, the Prime Minister says she was more mature when she started writing compared to him and her observations are more discerning than his, adding that he does not always agree with her views and so does she.

On Marina's column, Dr Mahathir says that it is obviously an independent column and the views do not reflect those of the government, despite the strong connection that Marina has with the so-called establishment.

"One is tempted to ask from where she acquired this sense of independence, this urge not to conform, to be critical and not just cheer on those in power," he adds. -- BERNAMA

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