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PM'S CALL FOR LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES TIMELY, SAYS DAP

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 19 (Bernama) -- The DAP today lauded Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call to discard the misconception that nationalism is confined to using one's own language.

Its secretary-general Lim Kit Siang, in a statement here, said the call was "most appropriate and timely, especially for a multilingual society facing the challenges of the Information Society in the 21st century."

He said it was time for Malaysians to show a more open and enlightened attitude towards their mother-tongue languages by recognising them as part of the Malaysian languages.

Dr Mahathir, when making the statement in Kota Kinabalu yesterday also referred to certain quarters who rejected the English language by holding on to the mistaken notion that learning foreign languages would be against the spirit of nationalism.

Lim said DAP had always called for literature written by Malaysians, regardless of the language it is written in, whether Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese, Tamil or English, to be recognised as part of Malaysian literature so long as it was Malaysian-centred.

Meanwhile, DAP deputy chairman Karpal Singh in a statement here also commended Dr Mahathir for his liberal stand on the issue.

He said that emphasising the need for English to be given priority would not mean relegating Bahasa Malaysia to a pedestal of no significance as one language could complement the other and with combined strength, Malaysia could effectively advance internationally. -- BERNAMA

RAZ JK