

05/11/2000

Encourage young talent, says PM

Zubaidah Abu Bakar; K. Bala

LANGKAWI, Sat. - The international honours won by Malaysian artists should be further publicised to inspire young talent to venture into the world of arts.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said young artists must be brave and prepared to face challenges encountered by the older generation of artists. "This success (of local artists internationally) should be maintained and promoted," he said at the simultaneous opening of the Ibrahim Hussein Museum and Cultural Foundation (IHMCF).

It coincided with the culmination of the 10-day inaugural Langkawi International Festival of Arts (Lifa). Over 100 painters, musicians, dancers and other artistes from around the world took part.

Lifa is organised by IHMCF, in collaboration with the Langkawi Development Authority, Kedah Government, Malaysia Airlines, the New Straits Times Press (Malaysia) Berhad and local hotels. The IHMCF, established in 1991, is a dream come true for renowned artist Datuk Ibrahim Hussein. It is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation, dedicated to promotion, development and advancement of art and culture.

The museum houses Ibrahim's paintings and works presented by his international artist friends.

Also present at the ceremony were the Prime Minister's wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain, national laureate Datuk A. Samad Said and Ibrahim, who is IHMCF's chairman and NSTP managing director Faiz Ishak.

Dr Mahathir said many local artists had not only made a name on the international art scene but were also able to sell their works for millions of ringgit.

Efforts to develop the local arts community should be continued both by the Government and privately-owned art museums and galleries.

The Government had in the past three years made various contributions.

Besides sophisticated infrastructure like the Istana Budaya, Petronas Philharmony Hall and the National Art Gallery the Government also provides incentives to artists.

Among the incentives are tax rebates for corporate bodies who buy and donate artworks to government art institutions.

On Lifa, Dr Mahathir said the festival could turn Langkawi into a global art resort island.

(END)