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Mahathir-Poets

POETS HAVE BIG ROLE IN CYBER AGE, SAYS MAHATHIR

LANGKAWI, Nov 4 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad wants poets to help the nation benefit from the cyber era by using their influence to change society's views.

"Through their poems, the poets can arouse the spirits of Malaysians so that we will be able to obtain the benefits of the cyber age during the era itself, and perhaps strive to become a more progressive race," he said.

The Prime Minister said this when launching the 15th National Poetry Day here tonight.

It was attended by about 250 poets and other literary figures from South Africa, Britain and Asean countries.

Dr Mahathir said poets must understand the developments of the cyber era which bring new ideas like globalisation and borderless world.

They would thus be able to arouse the people's spirit to master all new technologies so as not to lag behind other races, he said.

"We know that at one time the world underwent an industrial era which went by without us realising it. Maybe, the era did not attract the poets' attention to write attractive poems and because of that we did not benefit from the industrial era and industrial revolution.

"We are left behind as we are pre-occupied with problems among us," he said.

In entering the cyber era, poets who realise its importance would be able to influence the people's culture in this country to take part and be prepared to face the challenges in the era for their future.

"I believe when the people realise and work using the talents they have, God Willing we'll achieve success," he said.

Dr Mahathir said poets have big influence and if they could capitalise on their influence for the benefit of the race, religion and country in this era, they would be held in high esteem by the people for their contributions to the people's development.

He said poems could mould the people's thinking into making their stand in bringing about positive changes to the country's development.

Dr Mahathir was moved to tears when a group of poets recited a poem dedicated to him titled "Warga Berjiwa Besar."

At the function, Dr Mahathir presented the Tokoh Penyair GAPENA 2000 award to Ahmad Ariffin, 79, of Kedah.

-- BERNAMA

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