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`We must have high self-esteem'

M.K. Megan

PETALING JAYA, Wed. - The best formula to ensure the success of this country is for the people to have high self-esteem, good discipline, and be bold and courageous when faced with challenges, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight. The Prime Minister said these qualities would ensure solidarity among the people when attacked by foreigners who hoped for chaos to occur and the collapse of the Government.

Speaking at the Malaysian Formula Competition award presentation ceremony and the launching of Formula Malaysia Foundation here, he said Malaysians at all levels had the qualities to determine the best formula to realise their wishes.

"These qualities will bring the people closer and will not break the frontline to face the attacks as has been proven during the recent economic downturn.

"The financial crisis taught us a big lesson that our country can be attacked at anytime and hence the need for the people to remain united and place their trust in the Government and support its efforts.

"We have to build on our determination and good values to ensure that our Malaysian Formula will be our strong defence," he said, adding that in the era of globalisation, a winning formula was very vital.

"Since many countries have succumbed to world powers and are placed under the International Monetary Fund, surely all attention will be on us in an effort to control the whole world."

He said although initially, Malaysia was the only country that criticised globalisation today many other countries from the developed world were also critical of it.

Dr Mahathir also hit out at the Asian Wall Street Journal for listing Malaysia as the "the least free country in the world".

"I wish to remind AWSJ that the newspaper is printed in Malaysia and we do not restrict its circulation. Unlike some other countries which had restricted the newspaper's circulation from 3,000 to 500 after the newspaper criticised the country."

During the event, Dr Mahathir gave away about RM1.24 million as cash prizes to the winners from the six categories, including essay and short-story writing, photography, drawing, website designing competition and song composition.

The Malaysian Formula competition is one of the programmes drawn up to instil this awareness among the people. It was launched by Dr Mahathir on Sept 15, last year.

The Malaysian Formula and the prizes for the competitions were sponsored by Edaran Otomobil Nasional, Malaysian Resources Corporation Bhd, YTL Corporation Bhd, Southern Bank Bhd, Sapura Group, Sunway Group, Tenaga Nasional Bhd, KUB Malaysia Berhad and others.

He also launched the Formula Malaysia Foundation at the function.

Also present were his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Formula Malaysia Campaign chairman Datuk Hassan Harun, MRCB president Datuk Seri Abdul Rahman Maidin, EON chairman Tan Sri Salleh Sulong, Southern Bank chief executive director Datuk Tan Teong Hean and Sapura Group president Datuk Shahril Shamsuddin.

(END)