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Mahathir-Book

MAHATHIR LAUNCHES BOOK ON ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

KUALA LUMPUR, March 26 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today launched a book entitled "The Art of Living - Residential Architecture in the Islamic World" at the Islamic Arts Museum here.

The book features the work of Italian photographer Ovidio Guiata which presents a visual documentary of the details of Islamic architectural heritage.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir said it was amazing how the injunction of Islam against representation of figures of living creatures had not in the least reduced the beauty of Islamic architecture.

He said, instead, it had fostered the development of geometrical designs which were even more beautiful.

"In the course of our travels, my wife (Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali) and I have been fortunate enough to visit many homes both here and abroad and witness firsthand the beautiful architecture of Islamic lands," he said.

Dr Mahathir said an Islamic house would reveal valuable information regarding aesthetic principles, sense of beauty, social and moral values, political conditions of the time, the economic status of its dwellers and the climate of the area.

Islamic houses may, therefore, be considered as living encyclopaedias of a rich religious tradition, he added.

He said embellishments such as gardens, water channels, pools, fountains and fruit trees reflected the perception of Muslims of what paradise was in the afterlife.

Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah later toured an exhibition featuring works by Guiata which was held to commemorate the launch of the book.

The 172-page book, published by the museum, will retail for RM75 per copy and proceeds from the sale would be used for the upkeep of the museum.

-- BERNAMA

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