

25 AUG 2002

Merdeka-Samad

DON'T BELITTLE STRUGGLE OF LEADERS, SAYS VETERAN JOURNALIST

PETALING JAYA, Aug 25 (Bernama) -- Veteran journalist Tan Sri Abdul Samad Ismail said many among the country's younger generation are "politically illiterate" so much so that they fail to appreciate the struggles of the country's leaders.

He said those born after independence were generally a pampered lot who did not know the meaning of struggle and took things for granted.

"They don't struggle, so the meaning of struggle is lost on them. They know (when they were born) the country has already achieved independence, the policies are already in place. Like Malay traders...want to do business they ask for loans, subsidies, projects. If they don't get, they criticise the government.

"They have political awareness. In other words, they take an interest in what is happening around them, about the struggle of (Prime Minister) Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad but they are politically illiterate," he told Bernama in an interview.

The veteran journalist, better known as Pak Samad, said because of this the younger generation had become cynical and tended not to appreciate whatever was done for them by the leaders.

He said the independence being enjoyed now was the fruit of sacrifice and struggles, especially in the field of economic development.

"Previously the British only gave us independence, but the economy, rubber estates and tin mines still belonged to them," he said.

Pak Samad, 74, hoped that in conjunction with the 45th National Day celebrations, the younger generation would change its attitude and be more appreciative of the sacrifices made by the present and past leaders.

Recalling the country's struggle for independence, Pak Samad, who became a journalist at age 16, said the challenge then was not only to fight the colonisers but also to convince the people that they were capable of freeing themselves from colonialism.

"Actually, our problem was not only in facing the white people but also to deal with the Malays who did not believe that Malays could become independent," he said.

He said that was where the handful of Malay newspapers and journalists had played a role in the country's fight for independence by making the Malays believe in their own capabilities.

-- BERNAMA

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