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Mahathir-History

LEARN HISTORY, APPRECIATE INDEPENDENCE TO AVOID RECOLONIZATION, SAYS PM

PASIR GUDANG, Aug 24 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that students in schools should learn about the country's history and appreciate the struggles and meaning of independence so that they can avoid inheriting a country which has been recolonized.

He said that history was most vital "as it shows our origins, who and where we're heading to in the future."

"If we are ignorant of our history, we may commit mistakes which have occurred in the past...which caused us to be colonized for 450 years," he said when closing the national-level patriotism assembly of leaders and students here.

Dr Mahathir said that there had been many mistakes in the country's history which, if repeated, would be disastrous.

He said that the significant lesson learnt from the country's history was the fragmentation of the Malay states of the peninsula where the Malays were disunited, paving way for colonization.

The prime minister said that students were the country's future leaders who would eventually assume the responsibility of upholding today's achievements and striving for greater heights.

"To become leaders who could serve the country well, who could develop the country, it is most essential that the future leaders were aware of the country's history.

"If we're not aware of history, then we'll not be aware of our origins. If we're not aware of our origins, we'll not be able to determine our direction or where we're heading to," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that without knowledge of the country's history, future leaders might be believing that they were forging ahead but they were actually leading the country to retrogression because they would not be able to differentiate between the path backwards and the path forward.

He reminded that those who forget history would be punished by repeatedly committing mistakes.

Dr Mahathir warned of the danger of the people being caught off guard through thinking that Malaysia would always remain independent without determined efforts to defend its independence.

He said that the younger generation who had never experienced colonization and only read about it in text books as tales without much meaning could regard the struggles for independence as nothing extraordinary and as such feel that independence need not be defended.

"This is incorrect. We should be aware and understand our position...if we do possess the awareness and appreciation of our independence, then we'll need to be prepared to resist attacks on the country to ensure that we are not recolonized," he said.

The prime minister said that what the generation of future leaders needed to do was not only to learn about history and its lessons but also equip themselves with adequate knowledge to boost the strength of the people and possess the capability to defend the country.

He said that knowledge would enable the people to invent and produce themselves, among other things, sophisticated defence equipment to defend the country.

Dr Mahathir told the secondary school students who packed the indoor stadium that in conjunction with National Day on Aug 31, they should celebrate the occasion with renewed resolve to ensure that the country

remains free and independent.

He said that through the lesson learnt from history, the various races who regard Malaysia as their own must unite and possess the capability to jointly defend their beloved country.

"We may have originated from many different countries...but Malaysia is our country and we are all Malaysians," he said, adding that there was never any intention to rid any races of their identity and instead they had been accorded such extraordinary rights and freedom.

The prime minister reminded the people to appreciate tolerance and racial harmony and called on them to place emphasis on their similarities to further enhance racial harmony to enable them to jointly defend the country.

"Nobody can defend our country for us...we are the ones responsible in defending our country," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that racial unity should be fostered right from the school and university level.

He was confident that if the various races in Malaysia were to remain united and equip themselves with knowledge and keeping abreast with progress in the various fields, Malaysia would remain free and independent.

-- BERNAMA

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