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Mahathir-Nationalist

LANGUAGE NATIONALISTS NOT TRUE NATIONALISTS, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, May 3 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today nationalists who only fight for the language are not true nationalists because a true nationalist is one who strives to develop the race as a whole.

The prime minister reminded those who regarded themselves as nationalists fighting for the Malay language not to practise extremism in their quest.

"Don't be language fanatics, we want knowledge. We live in the information era," he said when opening a seminar on "Handling The K-Economy Challenges: The Role Of The Young Generation Towards The ICT Culture" organised by Umno Youth, here.

He said that the English language was a knowledge language and that without fluency and understanding of the language it would be difficult for Malaysians to master the knowledge and information available.

Those who opposed the use of English and only wanted Malaysians to be skilled in the Malay language were not true nationalists, he said.

"A true nationalist is one who wants to see his race stand and sit on par with the other races in the world.

"This cannot be achieved if (the people) are only fluent in the Malay language because it is not enough," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians must master languages that could benefit them and in fact for the Malays, it would not be such a burden to master two languages, namely Malay and English.

The Chinese were able to master the two languages besides their mother tongue, he said.

He said the information and knowledge skills were now in English and it would be slow and tedious if the information had to be translated into Malay.

Besides being good in both languages, the translator also had to be an expert in the field concerned so that the essence was not lost, he added.

He also said that it would be pointless to pepper one's speech with Malay proverbs if the audience did not understand the language because such language could only be used when communicating with people who understood it.

He said, for example, that if one spoke in Malay in Geneva on the topic of the Malays not disappearing from the earth, one would not be understood by the audience who were from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Dr Mahathir said although the services of an interpreter or translator could be used, it did not necessarily mean that they could translate every word accurately and this could cause misunderstanding between the two sides.

-- BERNAMA

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