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PM: More Malaysians appreciating independence

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - More Malaysians are appreciating the nation's independence as evident in the large turnout at activities organised in conjunction with National Day, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

The Prime Minister said the large number of people at such events reflected the level of patriotism of Malaysians.

"Such activities organised in appreciation of independence day are good as they remind people who do not appreciate independence of the importance of being free from being colonised," he said.

Dr Mahathir was speaking before launching an exhibition of paintings, "Images and Voices of Independence" at the Maybank Art Gallery.

The exhibition is being jointly organised by Maybank and Anugerah Gallery Sdn Bhd.

He also received RM200,000 on behalf of the Warriors' Day Appeal Fund from Maybank.

Part of the proceeds from the sale of the 107 paintings, by as many artists, on display at the Art Gallery will also be forwarded to the Warriors' Day Appeal Fund.

Dr Mahathir said the activities reminded the people to safeguard the good fortune of being independent, besides instilling patriotism.

He said there were many people born after independence, and even some born before that, who did not know how it felt like to be colonised.

"Those who grew up after independence do not show enough appreciation towards the freedom they have.

"They take independence as a normal thing.

"But many people had worked very hard to resist the British and held negotiations to achieve the independence we have today.

"Over time, people forget history. With that, appreciation towards those who fought for independence too slowly deteriorates," he said, adding that the contributions of those who fought for independence were invaluable.