

The nationalism

NST 2 AUG 1983

we need: Dr M

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TANJUNG MALIM, Mon. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today criticised those who branded nationalism as un-Islamic. Nationalism can, in fact, be used to build a strong and modern Malaysia if it is understood in its proper context, he said.

"Some factions in our country wholly reject nationalism as un-Islamic. Such a view has tended to cause anxiety and uncertainty among those who do not understand the concept of nationalism and its relationship with Islam," the Prime Minister said.

"Nationalism is not wrong, according to Islam. What is against Islam is not nationalism but the idolisation of a nation to the extent of casting aside religion.

"It is, therefore, important for the people to fully understand the concept of nationalism in its proper perspective," he said, in order to build a happy and progressive nation.

"To reject nationalism because of narrow-mindedness is not desirable as it can adversely affect

tionalism and help build a strong foundation for a modern nation.

He said the most appropriate brand of nationalism was one that spurred the people to work towards physical and spiritual progress.

"Such nationalism will produce individuals not only capable of standing on their own feet, but also

with the will to work hard. They will also be imbued with high moral values in line with the principles of Rukunegara.

"Although we are an integrated society, we must gradually encourage the formation of the basis and features of a new modern Malaysian race in line with our national aspiration," he said.

One of the most important vehicles through which the spirit of nationalism in its proper perspective can be effectively implanted is education, he said.

"Education, whether in its formal or non-formal structure, is surely the most important channel to absorb the values inherent in nationalism," he said.

The Prime Minister said there was the question, too, of how "we should include the various aspects of nationalism" in the whole education system.

the achievement of long-term objectives.

"The achievement of these objectives can, in fact, strengthen the values that are in line with the teachings of Islam.

"The type of nationalism we need now is not a narrow or parochial one. What we need is one that injects wider values to lead us to progress,

"In the context of our country, nationalism covers the values of religion which is based on the values of Islam.

Values

Nationalism has a wider meaning than just struggling for *Merdeka* and upholding the sovereignty of the nation, he said at the opening of the education convention of the Sultan Idris Training College Old Students Association (*Suloh Budi-man*) here.

What was important was to inject new values and aspirations to enable the nation to progress, he said, adding that the nation will not progress smoothly if the people failed to understand the concept of nationalism.

Nationalism, he said, had an important role in guiding the nation through present and future challenges.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the people should understand the needs of present day na-