

# Writers told to carry on the spirit of the nation

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called on writers to help continue to keep alive the spirit of nationalism through their writing for the benefit of the younger generation.

Describing the pen as mightier than the sword, Dr Mahathir said writers must use their pens to plant the spirit of nationalism in the heart of every Malaysian.

Writers, he said, must not allow the spirit of nationalism to fade away and perish.

"With the spirit of nationalism alive, not only will the country succeed, but religion would also be protected," he said when opening the *Nationalism in Literature* exhibition at Muzium Negara.

Dr Mahathir added that writers must not regard their work merely as their source of livelihood.

While he acknowledged that this was important, Dr Mahathir said writers must at the same time ensure that their works brought about other benefits.

## Teachings

"The spirit of nationalism must be highlighted. This means (writing about) good values such as the clean, efficient and trustworthy concepts which would make a nation respectable."

Dr Mahathir also described as "shallow thinkers" those who opposed the Government's move to spread the spirit of nationalism.

This group had stated that instilling the spirit of nationalism was against the teachings of Islam.

Dr Mahathir said the spirit of nationalism meant practising the good values which were in line with the teachings of Islam.

He said the spirit of nationalism was important if the country and the religion were to be protected.

He added that the people could not rely on others to defend the nation.

To drive home this point, Dr Mahathir cited what was occurring in Afghanistan as an example.

While Malaysia and

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## WE MUST FIGHT ON OUR OWN: P.M.

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other Muslim nations were sympathetic towards the Afghans in their battle against the Soviets, no Malaysian was willing to fight or die for that country.

"If something similar happens here, it would be left entirely to us to defend our country and religion."

The exhibition is held in conjunction with the National Day celebrations. The works of Malaysian writers who had offered their ideas and insights towards independence and nationalism are being displayed at the exhibition.