

# Dr M on writers' role to instil nationalism spirit

917 AUG 1985

(P)

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Writers play an important role in instilling the spirit of nationalism among the new generation, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said that writers should not consider their profession as a means of *cari makan* (a livelihood) but as a means to bring about "something beneficial to the nation" by instilling the love for the country.

"Inculcating noble values among the young will make them responsible citizens and a nation which will be

respected by others," he said when opening the exhibition on Nationalism in Literature at the Muzium Negara here.

The exhibition is jointly organised by the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and the museum.

Dr Mahathir said that writers, who were responsible for bringing about the growth of nationalism during the pre-independence period, must try to perpetuate this feeling among the young through their writings.

The development and the

progress achieved by the nation depended greatly on the positive values which its citizens had acquired when they were young, he said.

He stressed that without the spirit of nationalism the people would not be able to defend the country when they were needed to do so.

Dr Mahathir also criticised certain quarters which opposed nationalism as advocated by the Government.

"There are shallow thinking people who believe that nationalism is a narrow con-

cept which would inevitably lead to polarisation of race and religion," he said.

He reminded them that independence in the country was achieved as a result of the growth of nationalism at the time of which writers played an important role.

"Only by inculcating the spirit of nationalism could the citizens be willing to scarifice themselves for the nation, race and religion," he said.

He added that "having nationalistic spirit" was nothing to be ashamed of.