

10 NOV 1985

# How M'sians can overcome recession: PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Malaysians can overcome the effects of the recession if they live within their means, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said they should not take the attitude embodied in the Malay adage *Biar papa asalkan bergaya* (poverty does not matter as long as you have style).

Speaking at the dinner of the Diplomatic and the Administrative Services at the Putra World Trade Centre here, he said the country was facing problems be-

cause it did not have the economic resources of developed nations.

"The first step is to change our attitude. We must recognise our limits and live within them."

He added that Malaysians must change their negative attitude and learn to be thrifty as it was up to them to counteract the effects of the recession.

He also denied that Malaysia's economy was completely tied down to world economy.

"We still have a lot of options available to help us face the recession and turn it around to our

advantage," Dr Mahathir said.

The Prime Minister also said that the Look East policy had been wrongly interpreted by many as buying goods from, and giving contracts to Eastern countries or their companies.

"The integration of Islamic values into the administration has also been misinterpreted.

"Many believe that this is an 'open cheque' for them to do anything in the name of instilling such values," he said.

Dr Mahathir said it was the duty of every senior government

official and political leader to understand the policy before implementing it.

Such positive values should be used in the country's administration, he added.

Dr Mahathir also said that steps should be taken to reduce the size of the public services.

The financial burden on the Government was great now, he said, and would become even greater when civil servants retired.

"Reducing the size of the public services does not mean that the quality of administration will di-

minish. The use of special equipment and computers will compensate," he said.

Dr Mahathir also added that the privatisation of many Government services would also help reduce the number of civil servants.

"The workers will not lose out as their income will remain the same."

He also said one way for civil services to increase productivity would be to live up to the Leadership by Example campaign launched by the Government in 1983.