

# Put patriotism above racial interests: PM

‘Bickering, however small, will hinder progress’

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MALACCA, Fri. — The people must never allow their patriotism to be clouded by narrow communal interests, the Prime Minister said yesterday.

Bickering, however small, over such issues as culture would only contribute towards retarding the progress of the nation.

“What is important is love for the country. This must come first.”

Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad said that while each community was culturally different, “it does not mean we cannot continue to co-operate to develop the country”.

## Basic character

“It is the stand of the Barisan Nasional that only through co-operation between the races can the country be developed and the people enjoy the benefits of development.”

Dr Mahathir Mohamad said a community should not feel a sense of loss and make much bones about an aspect of a culture that is no longer practised or appreciated.

By ZAINON AHMAD and P. SELVARANI

“Culture is dynamic. It should absorb new traits and values and reject old ones which are no longer compatible with the times.

“A culture which does not change is a dead culture,” he said at the opening of the Mini-Malaysia Cultural Village and the Air Keroh Country Resort.

Among those present were Chief Minister Datuk Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik, Terengganu Menteri Besar Datuk Wan Mokhtar Ahmad, Penang Chief Minister Dr Lim Chong Eu and representatives of the other States, who later declared open their respective State cultural enclaves in the Mini-Malaysia park.

The Prime Minister said culture was a living thing and for it to remain so it had to absorb new values and traits, even if they were adapted from other sources.

Some cultural traits might become obsolete with improvements in communication and should be abandoned.

The basic character of a culture, however, could continue to exist even

through changes.

“A Malay is still a Malay even if he abandons the traditional wooden house on stilts for concrete buildings.

“A Malacca Malay is still a Malacca Malay even if he has given up the habit of eating *cincalok* and *belacan*.”

Dr Mahathir was also happy that this adoption of different values was now apparent in the field of architecture and noted that new buildings in Kuala Lumpur were a blend of the traditional and the practical.

## Two objectives

“They are not just boxes and glass towers.”

While the Mini-Malaysia project was to help promote tourism “we have been cautioned against the influence of the cultures of the foreigner.”

“But our dynamic culture should be able to filter out the bad aspects of any culture and absorb what is good.”

In his speech, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik said

the Malacca Government planned to extend the concept of the Mini-Malaysia cultural village to cover the Asean region.

A Mini-Asean cultural village would not only strengthen solidarity among member-nations, but also enable the people of these countries to have a better understanding of the diverse cultures in the region.

The State Government hopes to construct traditional houses of Asean countries in the Mini-Asean village.

On the Mini-Malaysia project, Datuk Seri Rahim said it had two objectives — to create greater solidarity among Malaysians and to encourage tourists to visit the different States.

On their arrival at the complex, the guests were given a traditional welcome by youth dressed in traditional costumes of the various States.

Soon after the opening ceremony, the State representatives officially opened their respective State traditional houses.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir opened the Kedah house while Datuk Seri Rahim opened the Malacca house.