

PM: Encourage the writing of non-fiction

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — The Prime Minister has called for the co-operation between firms and literary organisations in the country to be extended to the writing of non-fiction books.

Speaking at the Esso-Gapena dinner at the Hilton Hotel here tonight, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that several private firms had teamed up with literary bodies and writers' organisations such as Gapena (Federation of Malaysian Writers' Associations) to sponsor literary competitions for the writing of novels, short stories and poetry.

"However, we are still short of reading materials and Bahasa Malaysia books in various fields of knowledge such as science and technology, medicine, economics, geology and so on.

"Although the amount of Bahasa Malaysia reading material in these fields is growing day by day, there is still much that we can do to draw on all the sources of knowledge and learning through Bahasa Malaysia.

"The framework of co-operation between the relevant firms and organisations may

be extended to the field of non-fiction.

"Firms involved in the production and marketing of a certain product may be able to sponsor the writing and translation into Bahasa of books related to that product.

"For example, firms which produce food products may be able to sponsor the related in-depth writings in the field of food or nutrition.

"These studies and writings should be on the latest developments in that field.

"As we are all aware, the market for non-fiction books in general, is limited.

"Without such encouragement or sponsorship, the development of these books may not be satisfactory or may not receive any response."

The Prime Minister also said that these efforts would enable the private sector to play a bigger role in the cultural field.

On literature in the country, he added that the literati should make more efforts to sow pure, dynamic and positive values among the people because these would help to build up the desired national character.