

# Get rid of obsolete values: PM

NST 25 SEP 1987

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — The Prime Minister today said that the people can contribute towards forging a new and progressive Malaysian society by discarding traditional values that are obsolete and giving new interpretations to those that can serve present needs.

In doing so, the people should be courageous. They should reject traditional values that stand in the way of their efforts to build a resilient, dignified and respected nation.

However, he added, not all that was old is archaic and useless. Many can still serve contemporary needs if given new meanings.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mo-

By ZAINON AHMAD

of the people and their feelings. Those that were devoid of them were meaningless and would not be appreciated.

Literature could not emerge from a vacuum.

A popular work would be one that was the direct interaction between the writer and the society in which he lived.

Writers should not use pen and paper to express just their own thoughts and feelings but should be sensitive to the current trends and changes and should interact actively with society.

The Prime Minister said writers at the same time should be aware of "our politi-

□ BAHASA POLITICALLY EXPLOITED — USMAN  
□ A POET MUCH IN VOGUE

— PAGE 2

hamad praised author-poet Usman Awang for his ability in adapting traditional values to serve modern needs in his writings.

Speaking at the launching of Usman's *Drama-drama Pilihan* and *Puisi-puisi Pilihan*, he paid tribute to the National Literary Award winner, calling him a person who through his writings had been successful in "transcending race and nations."

This was the first launching of books by the Prime Minister. According to Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka director-general Datuk Hassan Ahmad, the launching was a first for DBP books.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir called on writers to contribute to efforts in effecting change in society.

He said literary works should express the aspirations

cal and social realities."

Whatever the motives of a writer, he could not totally ignore his society.

He said Usman had changed the way Malaysians looked at classical literature. His poems might be traditional in character, but they exuded a peculiar firmness and boldness.

If he was said to be romantic poet, it could be because of his style. But behind the apparent "softness" could be detected protest and sharp criticism.

Dr Mahathir also used the occasion to express the Government's dissatisfaction with the present level of reading interest among the people although various efforts have been made to encourage this.

After launching the book and amidst the rich and lilting sound of the gamelan, the Prime Minister was presented with the two books by Usman.