

# Dr M: MTSU claims will burden nation

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — **Da-tuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** said today that approving technicians' claims for better salaries and terms and conditions of service would burden the country.

"I have no right to decide because it would not only burden me but also the people and the country," he added when opening the three-day Malayan Technical Services Union

(MTSU) triennial delegates conference.

The Prime Minister said he had to disappoint delegates who may have hoped for a decision today.

Dr Mahathir was referring to the plea by outgoing MTSU general-secretary Mr A. Ragunathan to get the Government to implement the Dec 4, 1985, accord to upgrade technicians' salary into Group B besides im-

proving the salary scheme for technical assistants and agricultural assistants.

Dr Mahathir urged the MTSU to study the implications if the claims were approved.

Earlier, Mr Ragunathan in his speech, had taken the Public Services Department (PSD) to task for failing to adhere to the principles of the Cabinet Committee Report in deciding on the technicians' claims.

He said the PSD must translate into action policies outlined by Government leaders on the importance of blue collar workers if the country were to propel itself towards industrialisation.

However, he acknowledged that the matter could not be resolved through industrial action "as the best channel is still the negotiating table."