

# Change with the times, Malays told

KUALA LUMPUR. Tues. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malays should discard some negative elements of their civilisation which have become inappropriate because of changing times.

The Prime Minister urged Malays to absorb elements of other civilisations if these can help the race become more successful.

What was important was not the golden age in history but contemporary achievement.

"While maintaining numerous aspects of their civilisation, Malays must be brave in aborting some aspects that have become inappropriate because of

changing times," he said when opening the second International Conference on Malay Civilisation here.

Dr Mahathir said the progress or failure of any race depended on the values of life which formed part of its civilisation.

"If today we find that our civilisation is not as glorious as in the past, it is because we have inherited those values that are bad."

He called for an in-depth study on contemporary and Malay civilisation.

Such studies must come to terms with some of the negative elements obstructing the development of the Malay race.

The Prime Minister said there must be intellectual

honesty when focussing on the development of certain characteristics related to the development or backwardness of the Malay race.

"Let us not disregard the negative elements in our civilisation merely because it reflects the personality of our civilisation. If the element is bad, we must be brave to admit it is bad.

"There is nothing worse than maintaining something that is bad because of sentiment or false pride."

About 300 participants from 23 countries are attending the six-day conference which provides a forum for scholars from East and West to discuss issues affecting Malay civili-

sation and culture.

Dr Mahathir said the bad elements must be wiped out although it represented part of the Malay identity.

He noted that studies on Malay civilisation usually took on the form of historical research, adding that there were usually exhortations "on this or that aspect which formed part of the history of the Malay ethnic group."

"We will take pride in the success and glory of a certain era as proof of the advancement of our civilisation in that period," he said.

Dr Mahathir also noted that the level of achievements of the different civilisations in this era was

more evident than in the past.

In view of this, he said, it was imperative that the maintenance of the past civilisation would not weaken or cause the Malays to be backward.

"What is the point of having a civilisation if it does not lead to a better life. Civilisations that do not achieve success will only become historical reading and research materials like the past civilisations in Egypt, Greece and Rome."

The Malays, he said, must be prepared to accept their heritage and be willing to face all challenges as well as assimilate good new values.