

# Focus on learning

## English says PM

Star 10/SEP/1999

BANGI: Datuk Seri Mahathir Mohamad called on Malaysians to focus on learning the English language and, at the same time, not mistake this as being not nationalistic.

The Prime Minister said that nationalism meant being really good in developing one's country.

"If you do something that appears to symbolise nationalism, but in the process you prevent the country from developing because you don't have the knowledge, then you are not being nationalistic.

"Some people cannot differentiate between symbolic nationalism and real nationalism.

"Real nationalism means you must be prepared to do everything possible for your country.

"If it means learning

English. If it means learning Russian, by all means, learn Russian," he said.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters after attending a dialogue with 4,000 students from all the universities in the country at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia here yesterday.

Asked about the deteriorating standard of English in the country, the Prime Minister said: "I am sorry that this is happening but it is necessary for us to learn English because English is not the language of the English people anymore."

He said that since English had become a universal language, Malaysians must master the national language as well as the English language.