

MAHATHIR-DRUGS
BM

KUALA LUMPUR, MAY 6 (BERNAMA) -- (P) DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TOLD THE PEOPLE TODAY THAT THE NATION WAS FACING A SERIOUS THREAT FROM DRUGS AND THAT IT WAS THEIR DUTIES TO HELP THE AUTHORITIES OVERCOME THE PROBLEM.

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER STRESSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO REMOVE THE +GRAVE DANGER+ IF THE PUBLIC TOOK THE PROBLEM LIGHTLY.

+THE SUCCESS IN COMBATING THE DRUG PROBLEM WILL DEPEND ON THE ATTITUDE AND COOPERATION OF THE PEOPLE,+ HE SAID WHEN OPENING A NATIONAL ANTI-DRUG EXHIBITION AT THE MUZIUM NEGARA HERE.

DR. MAHATHIR SAID THE DRUG PROBLEM POSED A SERIOUS THREAT TO THE NATION NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE INCREASED NUMBER OF ADDICTS BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF POSSIBLE EXPLOITATION BY THE COMMUNISTS.

--BERNAMA MORE 1454/BY

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ACCORDING TO HIM, THERE ARE MORE THAN 20,000 KNOWN DRUG ADDICTS IN THE COUNTRY.

HE SAID IF THE LARGE NUMBER OF UNKNOWN ADDICTS WERE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT, THE TOTAL FIGURE COULD EASILY REACH 100,000 -- EQUAL TO THE POPULATION OF A BIG TOWN.

THIS MEANT THAT MILLIONS OF RIGGITS WERE BEING SPENT EACH YEAR ON DRUGS. THE RATE OF CRIME HAD ALSO INCREASED.

DR. MAHATHIR SAID IT TOOK THREE YEARS TO REHABILITATE A DRUG ADDICT. EVEN AFTER THIS, THERE WAS NO GUARANTEE THAT HE WOULD NOT RETURN TO DRUGS.

+IN OTHER WORDS, 100,000 DRUG ADDICTS WILL BE A PERMANENT BURDEN TO THE GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY+, HE ADDED. --BERNAMA 1521/BY

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