

Dr M: No apology for tough drug laws

By A. KATHIRASEN

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BUKIT MERTAJAM,
Thurs. — Malaysia will not apologise for its tough anti-dadah laws which are intended to protect the country and its people, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Malaysia has to be firm in its fight against the dadah scourge and could not afford to be compromising.

The Prime Minister said anyone who violated Malaysia's anti-dadah laws had to face the consequences.

"We cannot consider the colour of the skin, philosophy or any other matter in our fight against this evil," he told newsmen during a visit to the Insaf Diri Dadah Rehabilitation Centre here.

He was earlier briefed by the principal of the centre, Mr S. Barathan. Also present was Chief Minister Dr Lim Chong Eu.

He toured the centre

which has 300 inmates.

Asked to comment on the reaction from Australia over the case of the two Australians sentenced to death for dadah trafficking, Dr Mahathir said he was informed that Australia was satisfied with the treatment accorded the two and that it respected Malaysian laws.

"I was in Perth recently and the Australian Prime Minister (Bob Hawke) telephoned me, but he did not raise this matter," he said.

(Brian Chambers, 29, and Kevin Barlow, 28, were convicted of trafficking in 179.56gm of heroin at the Bayan Lepas International Airport in 1983. The Penang Pardons Board last Saturday rejected their appeals for clemency).

Firmness

Dr Mahathir said no one could say that although they committed an offence in Malaysia, they should be penalised in accordance with the laws of their own country.

"In the BMF (Bumiputra Malaysia Finance) case we had to allow a foreign country to take legal action against our people because we could not apply Malaysian laws against them."

The Malaysian Government accepted the reality that a crime committed in another country should be judged by the laws of that country.

"Therefore, anyone found guilty of a crime in our country will be dealt with according to our laws."

Dr Mahathir, who is also the Home Affairs Minister, said Malaysia had to be firm in tackling the dadah menace because it was now more serious than the communist threat.

Dadah addicts are not only unproductive but also a burden to their families and society.

'Murderers'

The country is spending millions in its fight against the dadah menace and on the rehabilitation of addicts.

Dr Mahathir criticised those who defended dadah criminals instead of paying attention to the suffering of the addicts and their families.

"Under the circumstances those proven to be culprits in dadah trafficking should be treated as criminals, even as killers, as dadah can and has killed."

The dadah trade is carried out by irresponsible elements without any regard for the suffering of other people and so they should not be allowed to go unpunished.

Malaysia is ready to co-operate with any country to fight the dadah problem and will play a major role in efforts to check the menace because the problem can only be tackled with the co-operation of all.