

# Stiffer penalties for luring girls into vice

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By Manan Osman

**KUALA TERENGGANU, Wed.** — The Government will review existing laws to provide for stiffer penalties, which include whipping, for those responsible for luring young girls into vice, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said the Cabinet had agreed to the review since those involved in such activities, including pimps, usually escaped with light sentences under existing

laws.

He said with the review, stiffer penalties would be imposed on those responsible commensurate with the crimes committed.

Dr Mahathir said that lately many teenage girls, including the underaged, had been reported missing daily and they were believed to have been lured into vice.

The matter had been raised by the Ministries of National Unity and Social Development and Human

Resources after receiving many reports on this.

He was speaking to reporters after chairing the Cabinet meeting at Wisma Darul Iman here today. Also present were Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad, Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Education Minister Datuk Dr Sulaiman Daud.

Dr Mahathir said based on reports, an average of three girls were reported missing daily, the majority of whom were Malays.

Dr Mahathir called on parents whose children are studying overseas not to be unduly worried over a report that 41 Malay students in the United Kingdom had switched religions after marrying non-Muslims.

He said following investigations by the Education Ministry, only one girl was found to have changed her faith after marrying a non-Muslim in London. The girl is not a student.

Earlier, Dr Sulaiman said investigations had failed to

find concrete evidence to support the report.

He said the Malaysian Students Department in London had tried all possible means in its effort to gather the necessary information, including looking through department records and students' relationships in all districts in the United Kingdom and Eire.

The report, therefore, had no connection with government-sponsored students, he said.