

Dr M tells ministries to study drug addiction

By HAMDAN RAJA ABDULLAH

MUAR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has directed two ministries to look into and curb the increasing number of drug addicts, especially among Malay youths.

Youth and Sports Minister Haji Abdul Ghani Othman said his ministry and the Education Ministry were also asked to study how youths were first exposed to drugs.

Dr Mahathir issued the directives after meeting the National Anti-Narcotics Committee on Thursday, he told newsmen after meeting about 150 Ledang Umno division members who will perform the haj this year.

Deputy Home Affairs Minister Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayob had told Dr Mahathir that most drug addicts were Malays, Ghani said.

"The Prime Minister fears the problem, if not checked, could hinder national growth besides increasing the number of HIV carriers," he added.

The Anti-Narcotics Committee meeting was also informed that most of the addicts are labourers in the 18-30 age group.

Ghani said Dr Mahathir was concerned over the reports and wanted the two ministries to start looking into the lifestyle of students and youths during and after school.

"Both ministries now plan to conduct a joint study to identify negative areas which can lead youth to drug abuse.

"Once we know these, we can plan long-term measures to put a stop to drug abuse and also stop the *lepak* problem which is also common among the Malays," he added.