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BN to discuss social ills of teenagers at special meeting

Kamarul Yunus

BARISAN Nasional (BN) will hold a special meeting specifically to discuss increasing social ills among teenagers in the country.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also BN chairman, described the meeting as significant as it will enable all BN component parties to play an effective role in solving social problems.

Speaking to reporters after chairing the weekly Cabinet meeting at Bukit Tinggi near Janda Baik in Pahang yesterday, Dr Mahathir said the ministers had suggested that the ruling party hold such a meeting.

However, the Prime Minister said he could not ascertain the exact date of the meeting.

"The meeting will involve all BN members. I feel all parties should view the problem seriously ... that is why we feel it is good that the matter be discussed in a special meeting," he said, adding that the matter was not discussed thoroughly during the Cabinet meeting.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said he supports the decision taken by Umno Youth to launch a programme to identify problem schools and students facing critical problems.

"It is good if they (Umno Youth) can do that ... we can obtain information and action can be taken. The Press can also provide us with information," he added.

On Tuesday Umno Youth chief Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the movement will conduct a nationwide study next month to identify schools with students who have disciplinary problems.

Under the plan, Umno Youth will gather information with the cooperation of disciplinary teachers in the concerned schools, and students deemed to have critical disciplinary problems will be absorbed into the movement's "Briged Putra".

Asked on the call to amend the Juvenile Act so that parents can be held responsible when their children are involved in social problems, Dr Mahathir said: "I need to first know the proposal in detail. I don't know yet what decision has been taken by the relevant authorities with regard to this."

Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak mooted the idea two days ago.

Bernama reports: Wanita Umno will mobilise its machinery to handle social problems faced by young people in the country, its head, Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman, said yesterday.

"We will hold discussions with the relevant ministries and implement programmes to help overcome the social ills that have befallen our youth," she said after talks in Kuala Lumpur with visiting Indonesian Minister of State for Women's Affairs Mien Sughandi.

She said Wanita Umno will hold today its third executive committee meeting since the new leadership took over and the issue of social problems faced by youths is on the agenda.

The meeting will explore methods and the gathering of data to resolve the problem and Wanita Umno's various bureaus will be brought in to handle this matter more effectively, she added.

Dr Siti Zaharah stressed that solutions to the problem need not include the use of force, but compassion instead, taking into account the current situation and the knowledge and information at hand.

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