

02/02/1997

PM to meet religious groups on social ills

KEPALA BATAS, Sat. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will chair a meeting on social ills affecting youths in the Klang Valley with religious officials on Wednesday.

The meeting will also discuss ways to tackle the problems, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today adding that the officials are from the Kuala Lumpur Islamic Religious Council and mosques.

He said this when attending a buka puasa ceremony with about 500 villagers in Kampung Padang Menora near here.

Anwar, who is also chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Social Ills, said the problems affecting youths in the Klang Valley included gangsterism, dadah abuse and sexually transmitted diseases including AIDS.

Also present at the ceremony was Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Mohd Shariff Omar.

Anwar said the Government viewed the social ills affecting youths seriously and would not spare any effort to check them.

"Our future is dependent on our youths. We must take immediate steps to check their moral decadence."

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said a similar high-level approach to tackle the rising trend of indiscipline among youths at the State-level would also be carried out later.

A study carried out in the Klang Valley on indiscipline among youths last year revealed some shocking statistics.

More than 70 per cent of the youths aged 13 to 21 smoked, 40 per cent watched pornographic films, 28 per cent were involved in gambling and 14 per cent took hard drugs.

In 1995, about 36 per cent or 7,300 people who contracted HIV were aged between 20 and 29.

Teenage crimes also increased from 2,480 cases in 1970 to 4,012 in 1995. The number of girls involved in vice rose from 325 cases in 1974 to 859 in 1995.

(END)