

Dr M shows emotion during speech

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By **NORMAN ONG**

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad overcame several emotional moments while talking about the sufferings of those with HIV/AIDS yesterday.

Speaking off the cuff at the *Red Ribbon Media Awards* in conjunction with World AIDS Day, the Prime Minister paused several times during his speech, in which he called for more information on the epidemic.

Dr Mahathir said he felt distressed to attend the function "at a time when we are faced with a disease that has no cure," adding that during the days when he was studying medicine, he thought that there would be cures

for all types of diseases.

"However, there are still diseases that have emerged that we have not identified before," he said, pausing for a few seconds to regain his composure before finishing his sentence.

Dr Mahathir said the world could have focussed on AIDS much earlier had the virus not been first discovered in developing countries.

"But when it affects people in developed countries, there is this fear that it could wipe out human life," he said.

Dr Mahathir said it was unfortunate that AIDS had spread through the ignorance of people.

"We have seen today the power of the media, we talk of the information

age and yet there is not enough information on something that is important as the prevention of AIDS," he said.

Earlier, Malaysian AIDS Foundation chairman Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir said about 27,000 Malaysians had been affected with the HIV virus, most of them while they were young.

She said there must be a change in attitude among the young generation towards the virus.

She suggested that HIV/AIDS education programmes be implemented in schools.

Marina said young people should be consulted before any programme affecting them and their problems was launched.