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PM: Don't poison young minds

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KUALA KANGSAR, Sun. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad reminded the people to be wary of attempts by groups trying to undermine the Government by various means, including by poisoning the minds of children.

These groups would not hesitate in instilling hatred among children as a means to garner support, he said.

These people included parents and teachers, he said. They have been trying to get their children and pupils to hate certain personalities and develop animosity towards the Government.

"I was told that their action has reached a level whereby my pictures are shown to these children and then stressed to them that this person ought to be beheaded," he told reporters during visit to a silverware plant owned by Mariwasa Sdn Bhd.

Dr Mahathir said he was not so concerned about the attempt to discredit him, but was more worried about the children eventually suffering mental anguish.

"All this while, we have been trying to instil good values among the people but there are people who not only do not listen but also prevented others from following good and sound advice."

Dr Mahathir had earlier attended a closed-door briefing for Barisan Nasional Youth leaders at the closing of a four-day work camp in Ulu Kenas, near here.

The work camp was attended by about 200 BN Youth leaders. Also present at the closing ceremony were MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik and BN Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein.

Asked about the open display of patriotism by many in the last few days, the Prime Minister said he was proud of these people who were apolitical by nature but who knew what they wanted.

"They were silent in the past, only making known their stand in elections ... voting for those they feel can meet their expectations."

Dr Mahathir said he believed ordinary Malaysians or the "silent majority" wished to express their views but did not know of the means to do so.

He said some believed that only activists would want to express their views even if their number was small. These activists were outnumbered by the silent majority who, however, were not active and did not know how to seek outlets to state their views and opinions.

Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat said yesterday the "Cetusan Perasaan" (Display of Feelings) campaign would be launched next week to enable the people to express their views with large books to be placed at public places.

Dr Mahathir said many Malaysians felt they were compelled to voice their feelings due to their disappointment and humiliation over last week's "scathing attack".

This was an apparent reference to the remarks by US Vice-President Al Gore on reformasi made during a dinner speech at the Apec forum.

On the possible use of the Internet during the next election, Dr Mahathir, who is also BN chairman, said if others wanted to attack the BN through such means, "we will have to make use of the same way".

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