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## Group taken to task for spreading lies on Internet

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today rapped some Malaysians who continue to abuse the Internet to spread lies despite the Government's efforts to produce an information technology-based society.

"This is like a knife, a sharp knife that we can use to carve beautiful things or to kill people. But those with no brains use it to destroy other people.

"So too with these people, when they get something useful they think of bad ways to use it," he said after giving away presents to children at a Children's Day gathering organised by the Welfare Body of Wives of Ministers and Deputy Ministers (Bakti) at Carcosa Seri Negara, here.

He said this when asked to comment on the abuse of the Internet at a time when the Government is stressing national development through a third-wave economy based on IT.

Dr Mahathir said this group was prepared to be involved in spreading unsubstantiated news including spreading rumours that he had died and did not fulfil all the obligatory rituals of the haj when he performed the pilgrimage in Mecca recently.

"So they use the Internet to spread unsubstantiated news like, for example, that I had died, that ostensibly I went to Mecca to repent because I wanted to return to die.

"There were many stories that I could not fully perform the haj. All types of lies were concocted."

He added this group which claimed to be fighting for justice for the people and nation was instead working for its own interest without thinking of national security.

"And these are the people who claim that they are bringing justice. Is it justice to me or justice to the Malaysian society or justice to our country if we lie to cause misunderstanding and chaos in the country?" he said.

Asked whether the Government needed to explain this third-wave economy to the people, Dr Mahathir said: "I think the ordinary people understand and they use all the equipment for good purposes. This we see, and many have entered the multimedia field, for example, to come up with various uses to benefit the society.

"These people understand, but those with closed minds will repeat the same thing no matter how we explain," he said.

Two hundred children from 13 welfare homes in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor and a group of students from the special class in Sekolah Menengah Bandar Sunway were feted at the gathering which included performances by children of Bakti members.

Bakti president Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali said Bakti was a big annual contributor to welfare programmes besides giving bursaries to poor students and helping disaster victims.

"Nothing gives Bakti more satisfaction than to contribute and to discharge its obligations to the needy and less fortunate," the Prime Minister's wife said. - Bernama

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