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`Unbridled freedom leads to abuses'

KUALA PILAH, Thurs. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today while the Government does not intend to restrict the people's freedom, it has to take appropriate steps to ensure it is not undermined.

The Prime Minister said if left unchecked, freedom could lead to abuses and create problems.

He said as evident in western countries, unbridled freedom had caused moral decadence and threat to peace and order.

Speaking to a large crowd before laying the foundation stone of Sekolah Menengah Agama Kuala Pilah in Selaru, 10km from here, he said the Government realised that religious education was one of the best means to inculcate moral values among the people.

He said the freedom practised by the West had given rise to immoral behaviour, broken families, free access to firearms and a host of social problems.

"When the authorities try to control the possession of firearms, the people there claim it is an attempt to deprive them of their individual rights to protect themselves."

It was with the intention to prevent social ills that the Government had been giving emphasis to promoting religious education, he said.

However, he added, there were groups out to make use of religion to achieve their own interest and political mileage.

Dr Mahathir reminded the people to be wary of parties which had been interpreting religious teachings to suit themselves.

"Some are not even shy to lie just to achieve their goals," he said, adding that their actions could mislead the people.

He spoke on moral and social problems in Pas-ruled Kelantan, saying that despite Pas' claim of giving emphasis to religion, the situation was bad. "Kelantan has a high number of cases of AIDS, HIV and dadah abuse."

He said if Pas truly placed emphasis on religion, such activities would not have been serious.

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