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Rakan Muda's new programme

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - The Youth and Sports Ministry will launch the Rakan Muda Cegah Penjenayah programme on May 7 in the light of gangsterism among students.

The programme will be carried out specifically for youths aged between 15 and 17.

The Ministry will work closely with city police, the Malaysian Crime Prevention Foundation and the Education Ministry to identify youths prone to social ills like gangsterism.

Youth and Sports Ministry director-general Datuk Raja Ruslan Raja Samah said statistics from the foundation showed that gangsterism mainly attracted youths aged between 15 and 17.

"By joining forces with the police, the foundation and the Ministry, we will have the power to penetrate the high risk group and enforce the programme effectively," he told reporters after a media briefing on Youth Day at the Ministry here today.

He said the Rakan Muda Cegah Penjenayah would be a programme to encourage youths to carry out activities which are relevant to their interests and needs.

Asked about the number of youths in the high risk group, Raja Ruslan said according to the Ministry's statistics, out of 3.5 million youths, only between one and two per cent were in the group.

"The number is small but it can be dangerous as if left unchecked, it may spread widely."

Raja Ruslan said the launching of the new programme did not mean that Rakan Muda programmes have not been effective.

"The programmes will continue to be preventive programmes for mental, physical and spiritual development of youths. But their activities will be reviewed according to the needs of youths in the present times.

"Besides youth policies and Rakan Muda activities, relevant issues for youths in the present and future will be discussed at the National Youth Consultation Council on June 23 and June 24," he said adding that the reviewing process was expected to be completed within six months.

On the Youth Day celebration which is scheduled to be held on May 15, Raja Ruslan said individuals or organisations that have made sacrifices for the development of the nation would be awarded with the 2000 National Youth Award.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is launching the national-level Youth Day celebrations at the Balok water recreation centre in Kuantan, will present the awards.

At least 7,500 youths are expected to attend the event.

Themed "Together We Face the Challenges of the Millennium", the programme lined up for the day includes a national youth camp for 400 participants, a community service project and a motivational programme involving among others, celebrity mariner Datuk Azhar Mansor.

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