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Master plan to curb ills

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - A five-point master plan to combat social ills among Hindu youths is being launched by the Malaysia Hindu Sangam together with Hindu organisations and temples in the country.

MHS president A. Vaithyalingam said today the plan calls for reaching out to students and youths with educational programmes on moral and human values.

Temples would become centres for community service in their respective areas.

"We want to reach the needy through social, welfare and counselling services and the masses through rich culture-based activities.

"We also want to bring proper knowledge and communicate with children, students and youths via impressive colourful media by going into information technology," Vaithyalingam said.

He was speaking at the MHS' 36th anniversary dinner where Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was the guest of honour.

Also present were Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and MIC president and Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, who is a patron of the MHS.

Vaithyalingam said the MHS, together with Hindu organisations and temples, was also planning two "grand awareness gatherings" to urge Hindu youths to be more service oriented.

"This project will cost RM1.5 million over a period of one year when implemented in full. This is a very ambitious plan.

"Its main aim is to overcome the social ills within the community," he said.

Vaithyalingam said the MHS appealed to Dr Mahathir to consider allocating a large grant to the MHS for the project which he said would help alleviate social ills among Hindus.

"A well-developed community will be in a position to serve the nation in a more mature way. This can also lead to a better understanding of national unity," he said.

Earlier in his speech, Vaithyalingam thanked the Federal and Selangor Governments for the role they played in containing what he said were "recent disturbing events" in the Jalan Klang Lama area.

"Hindus in Malaysia would like to live in peace and harmony in this country.

"We extend our hands in friendship to the Muslims and would like to solve our problems through dialogues and discussions.

"The same applies to all other religious groups," he said.

Vaithyalingam said as the dinner's theme was "Unity is Strength", and at a time of talks of unity meetings, the Malaysian Hindus also felt the need to be united.

"Malaysia has a unique concept of unity in diversity, and it is our strong belief that well united groups will lead to the ultimate national unity that all Malaysians cherish," he said.

Vaithyalingam said another request to Dr Mahathir was to ban "samsu" which he said contained a high level of methylated spirit.

He said that very often wives and children were the victims of "samsu" drinking fathers.