

21/07/2001

Stop the rot, says PM (HL)

Rosli Zakaria

KOTA BARU, Fri. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, concerned with problems of moral degradation and crime among youths, called on everyone, especially parents and teachers, to find out the causes and immediately overcome the situation.

He said it was very sad that today there had been many incidents involving teenage students, unheard of before, participating in cult-like activities.

"... not among the Chinese or Indians but the Malays ... the Indians, the Chinese are also involved but the number (of cases involving) of Malays is high.

"Today we read about a group of Malays who have departed from Islamic teachings, practising Satanism, involved in what is called black metal culture.

"Where did we go wrong?" he told a large crowd at the launch of the KUB Malaysia IT Literacy Programme 2001 at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Kubang Kerian 2.

The Cabinet has been reported to have ordered the authorities to question several bands believed to be influencing this group of youths to preach anti-God messages to others through their music.

The decision by the Cabinet yesterday followed reports that the cult group was roping in youths, mainly teenage students, to subscribe to their anti-establishment and anti-religion philosophy.

Statistics of secondary school students committing crime from 1999 to May this year were also given in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday - 12 cases of causing death, 123 rapes and 51 robberies and break-ins.

Dr Mahathir said the Government would not hide the problem because if it goes unchecked, more youths would deviate from Islam and crime activities would increase.

"We must ask ourselves where we went wrong and let's not hide them. The guilty party will have to be identified so that we can put things right ... let's not, due to other interests, cover up things that are wrong," he said.

He said that as a result of attempts to cover up things that were wrong, incidents that were happening now like activities rejecting religion by the youths would become widespread and more would copy them.

Dr Mahathir voiced his concern over the activities of the black metal group who produced blasphemous lyrics in songs and were willing to step on the Quran and Bible.

He said the sad thing was that most of the students involved with such groups came from religious schools.

"Is it that our religion calls on us to be involved in such activities... surely not! There must be something which leads them in being prepared to reject the religion and be involved in activities based on anti-religion and anti-establishment philosophy," he said.

Asked by reporters later in Pengkalan Kubor if the influence of the group as well as pornographic materials could still be spread via the Internet, Dr Mahathir said it was difficult to stop the flow of information through the Internet.

However, he said most of the influence came from compact discs and videos, but the problem could be overcome if children were properly brought up and provided with religious and moral education.

"When moral education and religious knowledge is strong, they will not engage in such a thing. It only happens when their belief in the religion is weak.

"When they start stepping and tearing the Quran, it shows that they did not get religious education.

"But we are surprised as to why students in religious schools, who should be getting religious education, cannot use their knowledge to protect themselves from such influence," he added.