

Concern over wayward youths, violent crimes

Parents who spend too little time at home with their children are partly to blame for social problems among youths.

Tamil Nesan quoted Women and Family Development Minister Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil who alleged some parents do not provide parental guidance to their teenage children.

She said long working hours should not be used as a convenient excuse since they have a moral obligation to educate their children on positive values.

Shahrizat said a recent study by her ministry showed that many parents spent less than two hours with their children.

In many instances, parents prefer to stay away from their youngsters even though they share the same house.

The study also reported that many youths claimed to be ignored or neglected not only by their parents, but also by other family elders.

Shahrizat pointed out that though parents may not be able to handle all the problems raised by their children, they should seek the advice of NGOs which offer such services.

Her ministry is also

looking into the introduction of special programmes to help parents guide their teenage children.

Tamil Nesan also highlighted the increasing incidence of violent crimes.

The latest figures released by the police showed that on an average day, one person is brutally killed and three women raped.

Last year, 608 murders were reported, with 131 cases involving foreigners. In 2000, 1,210 rape reports were received by the police as compared to 1,354 cases last year.

The daily quoted the Criminal Investigation Department's Datuk Salleh Mat Som as saying that the police had stepped up their efforts to combat serious crimes.

Consequently, the overall crime index rate dropped by 6.4% last year.

On other issues, *Malaysia Nanban* reported on the Health Ministry's decision to allow some 200 medical graduates to practise in the country, even though they had graduated from institutions which are not recognised by the government.

Its minister, Datuk Chua Jui Meng, said the cabinet had decided to be more

flexible on the intake requirements to overcome the serious shortage of doctors, especially in government hospitals.

The ministry estimated that there is a shortage of 3,500 doctors in the country as local universities produce only 900 graduates each year.

Malaysia Nanban quoted Chua as saying that the ministry was also looking into other measures, including the employment of more foreign doctors.

On the political front, *Malaysia Nanban* reported that the MIC might be allowed to contest in more constituencies in Johor in the next general election.

Mentri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said the party has a good track record in the state and Indian voters have remained loyal to Barisan Nasional.

MIC is currently represented by only two assemblymen and one member of parliament.

Ghani said even though BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the supreme council have the final say on the number of candidates from each party, Johor Umno will lobby on behalf of the MIC.