

# Public flogging for incest if people agree: PM

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SEPANG: The government might consider public flogging for those convicted of incest if the public gives its mandate, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"If the entire rakyat gives the government the mandate, we will implement it because these people have got no shame for committing such acts, even for stealing ... they steal money from Tabung Haji ... our society has got no shame," he said commenting on suggestions made by non-governmental organisations that those who commit incest should be whipped in public.

The prime minister was speaking at a press conference upon his return from an official visit to Morocco, Libya and Bahrain.

Mahathir said one of the reasons why incest is happening is due to ineffective religious teachings - where people concentrate more on politics rather than moral values.

"They ask religious students to concentrate on politics rather than moral studies and due to this, pupils do not know what is good and bad.

He added that the government provides facilities for religious studies in schools and in the community but priority is only given to politics and certain kinds of worship.

"There are no proper moral teachings being taught and we notice that these are the people who will commit such acts as incest ... I feel ashamed because those involved are mainly Muslims."

Mahathir said the government can implement tougher laws and penalties, just as it did for smuggling drugs into

the country, but this did not prevent people from such activities.

However, he said having such tough laws alone is insufficient.

Yesterday, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Rais Yatim said that he will present a working paper next month to the government on public caning for those who commit incest.

He said a Law Coordinating Committee is working with the Attorney-General's office to prepare the paper.

Meanwhile, in ALOR STAR, the DAP described the proposal as not practical and a "Taliban practice."

"The proposal (whipping in public) is not a measure to rectify the situation. It is a feudalistic concept and not applicable at the moment," said its deputy chairman Karpal Singh.