

Defend family values from further decline, says Dr M

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysians have been urged to make a greater effort to defend family values from further decline for the sake of future generations.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysian family values were very precious and if maintained, could be the most effective barrier against social ills and crime.

"When a country develops, the first casualty will be the family institution. Families will lose their bonds and most often the victims will be the children. We have seen how this problem is now plaguing the western developed countries and how their societies are riddled with crime.

"We should learn from them in our push to become fully developed. We can emulate their development successes, but we must hold fast to our own values system and our appreciation for our families," he said when launching the "Family First - Bring Your Heart Home" programme.

The programme is organised by the Women and Family Development Ministry to promote loving families.

Dr Mahathir said the "latch-key children" phenomenon in the country was on the rise and a new approach towards family development was needed to prevent children from being deprived of love and guidance.

"If this problem is not tackled fast it will result in a greater divide between children and parents and an increase in social problems and crime involving young people.

"Parents must make an effort to spend time with their children. Children need love from their parents. Without parental love, their lives will be destroyed as they will neither understand nor appreciate love and family ties later in their lives," he added.