

# PM: Judges reluctant to impose death sentence

BANGI: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has expressed concern over the tendency of judges to avoid imposing the mandatory death sentence against those charged under the section of the Dangerous Drug Act that spelt out the penalty.

The judges, he said, were more concerned with the belief that "we must not take away a human life" instead of considering the extreme dangers posed by the menace.

"Because of that, our law (on dangerous drugs) is no longer effective," he said during a dialogue session at the National Patriotism Congress yesterday.

Dr Mahathir was responding to a participant who asked about the Government's efforts to overcome the drug problem.

He said the law was amended earlier to specifically include the mandatory death sentence for drug traffickers after the Government realised that judges would avoid imposing the death penalty on those found guilty.

"That is why we amended the law and took away this choice from judges," he said, adding that a stiff sentence was the only way to overcome the drug problem in the country.

He also expressed disappointment over the lack of involvement of ulamas in the fight against drugs.

Although statistics showed that the number of Muslims was the highest among drug addicts in the country, the ulamas didn't seem to be concerned about this problem, he said.

"Some ulamas even resisted when we wanted them to raise the issue of drug problems during Friday sermons. Some argued that drugs was not mentioned in the Quran as something that is prohibited like alcohol," he said.