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Budget-Social

DR MAHATHIR CONCERNED WITH DETERIORATING SOCIAL VALUES

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 12 (Bernama) -- The prime minister today expressed concern with the moral decadence and incidence of crimes among the youth, particularly schoolchildren.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that previously, murders committed by under-age children, runaways among teenagers, extortion, truancy and gangsterism among students only happened abroad.

"Previously, we see such incidents only happening abroad, through TV and newspapers. But they are now happening before our own eyes, in our country," he said when tabling Budget 2004 in the Dewan Rakyat.

Dr Mahathir, who is also finance minister, said these were social ills resulting from the unrestrained influence of television and the Internet which had adversely affected some segments of the Malaysian society as well as destroyed its cultural values.

He also hit out at the illegal VCD producers who were only interested in reaping profits without any regard for the negative influence on society.

In a move to curb the social ills, he said, the National Social Policy had been launched with the objective to promote social development based on noble values and self-enrichment to achieve unity and stability.

He said the government would establish 50 community service centres in areas with high incidence of crimes and social problems to enable a more integrated, strategic and comprehensive approach to address social problems.

"The government urges the NGOs (non-governmental organisations) and members of local communities to work together to ensure the successful implementation of the policy," he added.

Combating social ills, particularly among the youth, the potential leaders of the future, must be intensified, he said.

He said efforts in building a Malaysian society with high moral values were not the sole responsibility of the government but also that of the family and society.

-- BERNAMA

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