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Mahathir-SARS

MALAYSIA TO SET UP GOOD LABORATORY TO CHECK DRUG-RESISTANT DISEASES

BINTULU, May 8 (Bernama) -- The government will set up a good laboratory to do quick investigation on the cause of drug-resistant diseases following the SARS outbreak, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The government had decided to spend money for that purpose as Malaysia was serious about finding a quick solution to such problems, the prime minister said.

Expressing satisfaction with the government's measures to contain the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome so far, he said: "This is something we must be prepared to handle...in future there will more SARS diseases due to mutation of bacteria and virus. So we will have to face this kind of problem all the time.

"As such, we have to have a proper agenda or programme for dealing with future diseases which will come to us. In this case, we don't even know how it is transmitted...we have no medicine, no vaccine. That's why we need to set up a good laboratory," he told reporters after opening the Petronas LNG complex, here.

Dr Mahathir said such measures were also in line with the government's seriousness in containing deadly diseases affecting the people.

He said that diseases such as the Nipah and the Japanese Encephalitis (JE) had emerged of late, exposing the vulnerability to drug-resistant diseases.

This also underlined the need to have a proper long-term plan to control new drug-resistant diseases.

"Of course the world spends 100 million dollors perfecting the latest nuclear bombs, so that they can kill people rather than save people.

"We are interested in saving people. We are not interested in killing people. But they will spend money doing all that (killing)...but not spend money on research to prevent such diseases," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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