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'Religion one way to curb crime'

THE increase in the crime rate is not peculiar to Malaysia but is a worldwide concern, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Religion could play a role in addressing this problem through the inculcation of values.

Saying the problem was caused by a breakdown in moral values, Dr Mahathir said: "Today, parents cannot control their children the way it was before. Neither can they inculcate values.

"This is the problem we are facing now. Pornography, porn VCDs are distributed world-wide in the millions and you can even download it easily from the Internet."

Dr Mahathir felt the quality of the movies was also not helping, with violence and sex being the themes of choice.

"For example, we see Terminator 1, Terminator 2, Terminator 3 ...I would like to terminate all of you also," he said in lighter vein, taking aim with an imaginary machine-gun at journalists at the Press conference held at the end of the second day of the Umno 54th general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre.

On why women seemed to be the majority of the victims, Dr Mahathir said this would be the result if people were obsessed with sex.

"After viewing pornography, they become aroused and couldn't care less of their actions. They do things that they have never done before."

Even the contents of novels published today contained some elements of sex and violence.

"I think they (authors) are bankrupt of ideas unlike in the old days when novels like (Emily Bronte's) Wuthering Heights and others were a good read.

"But now, if there are no killings, no sex, it is no fun."

On complaints by delegates against banks and financial institutions over their poor service in disbursing government funds meant for small traders under the micro-credit scheme, Dr Mahathir said it was a perpetual complaint.

"No matter what we do, people are going to complain. We can make a decision to give out money, but the process of giving out always involves people and sometimes people do things that other people don't like."

Told of complaints against people in charge of disbursing the funds and middlemen who allegedly solicited certain percentage from the loan amount, as feedback, to ensure prompt approval, Dr Mahathir who is also Finance Minister said: "But who is demanding? Bank officers? It is easy to say, but we can't prove it. If somebody cannot get it (loan) unless he pays (bribe), report to us. (The public) should be brave enough to report."