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Dr M: Ghost films hurt society

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KUALA TERENGGANU: Halloween is around the corner and if there is one thing that Malaysians are bound to relish are the scores of horror movies that are played on our television screens.

But if former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed has his way, there will be none.

He believes that movies depicting ghosts only promote belief in mythical beings and this was counter-productive to efforts to build a society with a more scientific approach to solving problems.

"We, especially Muslims, should know that only Allah has the power over everything," he said during his acceptance speech after being conferred an honorary doctorate in Science at the Universiti Malaysia Terengganu's ninth convocation here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said the prevalence of ghost stories was responsible for the hysteria attacks among Malay female students.

"Medically, humans have what is known as peripheral vision.

"A group of girls in a hostel telling ghost stories will soon see apparitions and shadows in their peripheral vision."

He said it was a common practice to engage the services of bomoh when girls had hysteria attacks.

He related how he had witnessed an Indonesian bomoh demonstrating his supposed invincibility while he was still a practising medical doctor.

"The bomoh inserted needles into those who wanted to be invincible and the next day, one of the men who

had supposedly become invincible came to my clinic.

"He told me he was invincible as the bomoh had inserted some needles into him, but I had no problem injecting a hypodermic needle into his skin."

Dr Mahathir said science was a relatively new field in the country as the British only emphasised the arts subjects.

"They said the arts courses would suffice as the target was to enable locals to become clerks in offices,

"When European medical doctors were brought in, locals were introduced to Western medical practices and in the end, many locals went for medical courses overseas."

He said Malaysians should now concentrate on adopting more scientific methods in solving problems.

"Without using scientific methods to identify and solve problems, we would only be guessing how to tackle the problem."

Meanwhile, at a press conference after the ceremony, Dr Mahathir said the hudud issue was just a political ploy by Pas.

"It is neither about hudud nor Islam as both hudud and Islam have been Pas' political ploy ever since they broke away from Umno.

"Islam promotes fairness and it would not be fair to implement hudud only for Muslims.

"It is not fair to cut off the hands of a Muslim man for theft and put a non-Muslim in jail for a similar offence."

He said applying hudud to all would drive away the non-Muslims.

"The economy depends heavily on the non-Muslims and the country will be in turmoil if they fled (because of implementation of hudud)," he said.