

PM: Revive Rukun Tetangga

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Prime Minister wants the Rukun Tetangga scheme to be quickly revived to fight increasing crime in the country.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the people had been voicing how uneasy or unsafe they felt.

"We do not want crime to rise further and make the country unsafe for our people and tourists," he added.

Of late, there had been a lot of concern over reports of violent crime and the rise in snatch thefts that resulted in serious injuries and even death.

Abdullah, who is also Internal Security Minister, said while the Government had been doing all it

could to beef up the police force, the responsibility should not be solely on the police.

"People should not keep quiet and not do anything. It's not only the police's responsibility. We want people to show they hate crime. We should have an active role in moving together and harnessing the strength of the *rakyat*."

"We should revive the Rukun Tetangga concept. Let us, the *rakyat* of Malaysia, act to reduce crime and make it safe for us," he said yesterday at the 53rd MCA annual general assembly.

Abdullah said the Rakan Cop pro-

gramme had been introduced and the Rukun Tetangga, which was a neighbourhood patrol group, had long been in existence.

"Rukun Tetangga is still around. So let's widen it now and make it active again. Everyone is saying that crime is bad (these days) and this makes us feel unsafe."

"With the *rakyat* acting together in safeguarding their areas and *kampung*s, we can bring down the crime rate."

He pointed out that this could be done, citing MCA's experience under former leader Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik in combating the Ecstasy scourge

nationwide.

Speaking to reporters later at another function, Abdullah said it was his view that if the Rukun Tetangga was reactivated and people power mobilised in a big way to fight crime, the rate would go down drastically.

"Even if we can't totally eradicate crime, we can at least reduce the number," he stressed.

Abdullah said that Rukun Tetangga regulations were already in existence and could be used.

"If there is anything that need to be amended, I will ask (Datuk) Dr Maximus Ongkili, the minister in charge, to act," he said.

At the MCA function earlier, Abdullah reiterated his directive to all quarters to stop raising sensitive issues, particularly those on religion and race.

He said even in advanced countries like the United States, there were sensitivities when it came to race or religious matters.

"This is the nature of man. When you touch on religious or race issues, it can get out of hand," he added.

The Government recently called on all parties to refrain from discussing sensitive issues such as Article 11 and Article 121 of the Federal Constitution which are related to race and religion.