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► Prevention efforts and legal enforcement to curb LGBT

THE government views the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT) issue seriously and is controlling its spread through prevention efforts and legal enforcement, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Mashitah Ibrahim told the Dewan Rakyat yesterday. She said these efforts are done with the help of the Islamic Development Department (Jakim) and State Religious Department (JAIN) through programmes such as the BEST! Tour which aimed to educate teenagers on social ills such as HIV Aids caused by homosexual lifestyles. "A series of rehabilitation and treatment courses will also be given to Muslims who have deviated from societal norms, while Jakim and JAIN have conducted a Mukhayyam programme with transsexuals who have repented to obtain positive feedback from them," she said in reply to an original question from Datuk Mohd Jidin (BN-Setiu) who wanted to know the government's seriousness in tackling LGBT issues in the country. In terms of enforcement, she said the laws clearly stated in the Syariah Criminal Offences (Federal Territories) Act 1997 (Act 559) which can only be enforced on Muslims. Dr Mashitah said the government and state religious authorities will take legal action against any Muslim involved in LGBT and who flout laws in each state. There are no legal and religious provisions in Malaysia which allow homosexuality, free sex and same-sex marriages, she added. — *Bernama*