

Not our intention to seize power: Dr M

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — The Federal Government has no intention of seizing the power of the Kelantan Government in introducing emergency rule in the State, Deputy Prime Minister Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad told the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

"Our intention is to bring back peace and administer the State in a proper manner.

"We hope this will help reduce the tension and enable those involved in the crisis to forget the past and start afresh," he said.

Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir said this when winding up the debate on a Bill to put Kelantan under Federal rule, the Emergency Powers (Kelantan) Bill 1977, at about 2 a.m.

He said he was confident that all quarters would like to see the situation in Kelantan return to normal as soon as possible.

This could be done if there were no moves to incite the people's feelings, either secretly or openly, he added.

"We will find ways to withdraw the emergency administration when the situation is a bit better because such a rule constitutes an additional burden on

the Federal Government," he said.

Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir said the Federal Government was still prepared to find a political solution or other solutions to the problem while the emergency rule was being enforced.

The political crisis, he said, was still unsolved but it did not mean that the authorities would not try to overcome it because "we believe and are confident that only by solving the political crisis that can we improve the situation in the State."

"But what should we do in the meantime? Should we leave the situation as it is now until we find a solution to the crisis which is difficult to solve?" he asked.

"As I mentioned earlier, we have tried to solve the crisis through several formulae until they became a mockery in the Press with one formula after another being formulated by so and so. It seemed the problem is still unsolved," he said.

Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir told the House that the Government had tried to stop the no-confidence vote on the Kelantan Mentri Besar from being taken up to the State Assembly.

"The Honourable Prime Minister had attempted to find ways to avoid the passing of the vote because according to the information we received, there was a possibility that a State of chaos might occur if the

vote was passed."

"Unfortunately, such a solution was rejected by PAS which said it was its right (to table the motion) and if it wanted to remove (the Mentri Besar) nobody has the right to stop it. It also said it has the right to decide on the replacement.

"Therefore, we tried to stop the vote of no confidence from being passed but since the Prime Minister's advice was not accepted, it went through and was passed by the State Assembly, and what we had predicted earlier now became a reality.

"However, we had made efforts to solve the crisis through political means," he said.

Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir reiterated that the Government always believed in goodwill and with the spirit of goodwill, the crisis could be solved through a compromise.

"That was why when an opposition member introduced a motion in the House to discuss the Kelantan affairs, I requested or in fact informed the Speaker that efforts to solve the crisis were being made and there was a possibility that it would succeed.

"Any debate in the House on the crisis might only worsen the situation. This was one of the ways to solve the crisis through political means but unfortunately, we failed.

"Kelantan now does not

have an effective Government and a Government that can administer the State is really needed now in order to carry out development projects for the people.

"All Government businesses could not be carried out properly because there are no effective Executive Council and Mentri Besar in Kelantan.

"This has led to the present situation and while these matters are being studied and a political solution could be formulated, we have to take immediate action because we just cannot wait any longer to see that the crisis is solved by political means. That is why we formulated this law," Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir said.

The Government also realised that the situation in Kelantan was a bit better now but this was because the authorities were forced to increase the number of police personnel there from 1,000 to 5,000 men.

Earlier, Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir refuted a statement by the MP for Nilam Puri, Datuk Haji Mohamed Asri bin Haji Muda, who said the emergency rule was declared in Kelantan "as a matter of convenience."

Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir said this was an emergency of inconvenience because of the inconveniences caused, not only to the Kelantan people but also Cabinet Ministers who had gone through

sleepless nights trying to find ways to solve the crisis.

"The member from Nilam Puri also said Malaysia had made three emergency proclamations which he said was a record if we compare with other developing and newly-independent nations.

"But most nations which obtained their independence after the Second World War are no longer democratic countries. Most of them are now ruled by dictatorial governments," Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir said.

"Although Malaysia has made three emergency proclamations, it is still adhering firmly to the principles of democracy. We do not declare emergency as a matter of convenience."

On Datuk Asri's statement that Federal Territory and Local Government Minister Haji Hassan Adli was no more a PAS member, Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir said he was confident that the statement was mentioned in good faith and not aimed at causing embarrassment to the Prime Minister.

"This situation arose because there was no move to leave the National Front and we welcome this, because it is a fact that we would like to have everybody, including the opposition, in the National Front.

"But the complications in the Cabinet set-up should not be used to embarrass the Prime Minister," he added.