

Dr M warns politicians against exploiting residents' emotions

# Don't make Cheras toll a racial issue

NST 10 SEP 1990

By K.P. Waran

KUALA LUMPUR, sun. — The Government will not hesitate to take stern action against politicians who use racial sentiments to incite the public to demonstrate against the imposition of toll on the improved Cheras road. Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad said politicians who exploited the emotions of the people to further their political interests would have to bear the consequences of their actions.

He said some politicians had been injecting racial undertones into the opposition to the toll by saying that the Government had allowed a high rate of toll to be imposed because Cheras is an area with a Chinese majority.

Saying that he was saddened by such remarks and allegations, the Prime Minister warned: "We will not allow them to attempt to hold the Government to ransom. We know who these politicians are and that they are using this issue to gain political mileage."

Asked by reporters after giving away prizes at the 1990 Bakht walkathon in the Parliament building, the Prime Minister said the Government was pre-

pared to help resolve the issue.

He said the Government would be responsive to the demands of the toll payers if they made use of the proper channels to voice their grievances.

He said demonstrating or allowing themselves to be exploited by politicians was not the correct way to solve the issue.

From Sept 1, drivers of light vehicles using the road are being charged \$1 each way while the toll for heavy vehicles is \$2 each way.

He said those who were resorting to racial sentiments to stir up the emotions of the peo-

ple to achieve its objectives.

This, he said, would neither benefit the country nor the people.

He said Malaysians should be thankful that under the Barisan Nasional Government there was peace in the country.

"We are thankful that the country is peaceful but it looks like these people are not happy with peace," he said.

On the detention of two DAP members under the Internal Security Act for alleged involvement in the demonstration at the Cheras toll plaza on Friday, Dr Mahathir said it was a police matter.

The two — MP for Sungai Besi Tan Kok Wai and Mr Lim Yit Chee @ Lim Kim Teo, the special assistant to Bukit Bintang MP Lee Lam Thye — were detained yesterday morning under section 73 of the ISA.

Two others who were detained under the same section, Ng Shing Chong and Yip Soo @ Yip See, have been released while 31 others detained for rioting under section 148 of the Penal Code have been released on \$1,066 bail each.

Dr Mahathir said as Home Minister he would only be directly involved in their detention after the police had completed their investigations within 60 days as prescribed by the ISA.

"After that the police will put forward their proposal whether the two have to be released or their detention extended. Only then I will be involved."

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ple' were walking a dangerous line especially since the Government was doing its utmost to unify the people.

"This is dangerous. Do not toy with racial issues. We will use the powers vested with the Government through existing laws and regulations to come down hard on them," he said.

On a statement by Semangat 46 that members of the party planned to hold a demonstration at the Cheras toll plaza tomorrow, the Prime Minister said it only showed that if the party was given the opportunity to rule the country, it would be prepared to use non-peaceful means