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TOLL-MAHATHIR
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SUBANG, SEPT 11 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THE GOVERNMENT IS WILLING TO CONSIDER APPEALS BY CHERAS RESIDENTS ON THE TOLL ISSUE BUT REITERATED THAT VIOLENCE IS NOT THE WAY TO RESOLVE ANY PROBLEM.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT RESORTING TO VIOLENCE IN A SHOW OF PEOPLE'S POWER WAS NOT THE WAY TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS IN MALAYSIA. PEOPLE'S POWER CAN BE VOICED THROUGH THE VOTE OR DISCUSSION, HE SAID.

+FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN THERE IS OPPOSITION TO MATTERS RELATING TO THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY AND THE EDUCATION ACT, WE CALL FOR DISCUSSIONS, WE SIT DOWN LIKE CIVILISED PEOPLE ... NOT BY THROWING STONES,+ HE TOLD REPORTERS AT THE KUALA LUMPUR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT HERE BEFORE LEAVING FOR SOUTH KOREA FOR A FOUR-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT.

A NUMBER OF CHERAS RESIDENTS HAD BEEN HOLDING DEMONSTRATIONS AT THE KM 8 TOLL PLAZA THE PAST FEW NIGHTS TO PROTEST THE \$1 TOLL IMPOSED ON SEPT 1 WHICH THEY CONSIDERED TOO HIGH. THE DEMONSTRATION ON FRIDAY NIGHT BECAME UGLY WHEN A SECTION OF THE CROWD THREW STONES AND BOTTLES, FORCING POLICE TO FIRE TEAR GAS TO DISPERSE THE GATHERING.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID OPPOSITION PARTIES HAD ATTEMPTED TO EXPLOIT THE SITUATION FOR POLITICAL GAIN BY USING +PEOPLE'S POWER+ AS THEY HAD NO POWER THEMSELVES. -- MORE
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+THIS IS NOT PROPER. THE OPPOSITION WAS OUT TO USE THE PEOPLE'S POWER AS THEY HAVE NO POWER, BEING OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT. WE CANNOT ACCEPT THIS,+ HE SAID.

ASKED ABOUT THE STATEMENT BY DEPUTY INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE TAN SRI ABDUL RAHIM MOHAMED NOOR THAT CURFEW MAY HAVE TO BE IMPOSED IF THE DEMONSTRATIONS GOT OUT OF HAND, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID: +IT IS NORMAL (FOR THE POLICE) TO TAKE THIS ACTION IF THERE IS A RIOT.+ HOWEVER, HE HOPED THAT THE SITUATION WOULD NOT WORSEN TO WARRANT SUCH AN ACTION.

HE SAID WHAT HAPPENED IN CHERAS ON FRIDAY NIGHT (THE THROWING OF STONES AND BOTTLES BY THE DEMONSTRATORS) SHOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED IN MALAYSIA.

WHEN ASKED ABOUT BUKIT BINTANG MP ENCIK LEE LAM THYE OF THE DAP WANTING TO MEET HIM OVER THE TOLL ISSUE, HE SAID ENCIK LEE COULD SEE HIM.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, THE RESIDENTS OF CHERAS NEED NOT HAVE TAKEN THEIR GRIEVANCE TO ENCIK LEE BECAUSE THE BARISAN NASIONAL ALSO HAD ITS REPRESENTATIVES IN THE AREA. -- MORE
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HE SAID THE BN REPRESENTATIVES HAD ALREADY MET HIM TO DISCUSS THE MATTER.

+WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE MATTER AND IT CAN BE RESOLVED PROVIDED THERE IS NO RIOTING. THIS (THE DEMONSTRATION) IS THE WORK OF A SMALL GROUP OUT TO GET POLITICAL ADVANTAGE,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WARNED THE PEOPLE CONCERNED NOT TO PLAY UP RACIAL SENTIMENTS, AND STRESSED THAT THE TOLL ISSUE SHOULD NOT BE TURNED INTO A RACIAL ISSUE.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD CONSIDERED APPEALS FROM RESIDENTS OVER THE IMPOSITION OF TOLL IN JALAN KUCHING, AND ADDED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO DEMONSTRATION WHEN THE TOLL WAS INTRODUCED THERE. -- BERNAMA
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