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An act of sheer stupidity, says Dr Mahathir

KOTA BARU, Fri. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the demonstration by about 1,000 university students and Pas members outside the Lembah Pantai mosque grounds in Kuala Lumpur today was an act of "sheer stupidity".

He said it was held at a time when the Government wanted to show Israel that Muslims are humans who could think and act rationally.

"But with this demonstration, all our objectives and intentions will not be achieved," he told reporters after speaking at a closed door meeting with Kelantan Federal and State Government officials and corporate leaders at Wadi Sofia in Binjai, about seven kilometres away.

Referring to the Israeli cricket team playing at a tournament in Kuala Lumpur, Dr Mahathir said the Government wanted to show that Muslims could act without being over-emotional. "But with this demonstration... stupid! What is the difference if they (the Israelis) went to Arab countries where they will meet with the same kind of action?"

Malaysia, he said, did not have diplomatic ties with Israel but with the demonstration, it gave Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu the resolve to continue building the Jewish settlement opposed by Malaysia.

In lambasting the demonstrators, Dr Mahathir said it was easy to demonstrate and perpetuate the war between Israel and Palestine.

"But they (the demonstrators) do not go to war, only demonstrate without facing retaliation like being shot. If they demonstrated like that in other countries... Bang! Bang! Bang! They are dead!"

Dr Mahathir said the demonstrators dared to do what they did because they took advantage of the Government's tolerance.

"But if you are really bold, then go (to Palestine) and do the clashing yourselves," he said. "Don't demand that other people go to war...do it yourself."

Referring again to the Israeli cricket team, Dr Mahathir reiterated that it was the Government's way of showing to the Israelis that Muslims could live peacefully with others.

Even the Israelis and Arabs speak to each other in Israel, he said.

"(Allowing the cricket team to play here) is to open their eyes," he said. "If they close their eyes, then it will perpetuate animosity. We cannot make perpetual enemies with anybody."

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