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LEAD Demo-Cricket

POLICE DETAIN 250 ANTI-ISRAEL DEMONSTRATORS

KUALA LUMPUR, April 4 (Bernama) -- Police today detained about 250 PAS members and university students for demonstrating against the presence of an Israeli cricket team in Malaysia.

Kuala Lumpur CPO Datuk Ismail Che Rus said among those arrested was PAS Youth secretary Mahfuz Omar, who was believed to be the mastermind of the demonstration.

He said about 500 demonstrators assembled near the main gate of Universiti Malaya here soon after the Friday midday prayers at a nearby mosque.

Thirty-four persons were arrested as police dispersed the demonstrators at the mosque, and another 16 surrendered themselves shortly after that, Ismail told a news conference.

He said police cordoned off the mosque from 2pm as some demonstrators remained holed up there, defying police orders to surrender.

Six demonstrators surrendered in the evening, while 195 others were arrested at about 8.30pm.

The 195 arrested at night had refused police requests to come out of the mosque where they stayed for about seven hours.

Inspector-general of Police Tan Sri Rahim Noor arrived at the scene at 8.20pm and the arrests took place soon after that, Ismail said.

They were brought to the Pantai police station on five police trucks at about 9pm, he said.

"Those detained will have their statements recorded to help police in their investigations under Section 27 of the Police Act 1960," he added.

He said all the people arrested were male.

Ismail said policemen were deployed near the mosque after authorities received information of an impending demonstration near the university.

He said police had to release smoke bombs before moving in to detain the demonstrators. The mob then became wild and started hurling stones and sticks at them, and 22 police personnel were injured slightly.

Last week, hundreds of PAS members and supporters demonstrating against the Israeli cricketers held a marching protest from Merdeka square to the Prime Minister's Department but no one was detained.

Ismail had earlier issued two statements warning the public that the police would take action against the demonstrators if they staged another illegal assembly.

The Israeli team, taking part in the International Cricket Council Trophy championship played its last inning against Argentina at Victoria Insitution this afternoon.

In KOTA BAHARU, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad described as "stupid" the actions of the demonstrators.

"This is a stupid act. We want to show the Israelis that Muslims are right thinking people people but with this act, the objective is not met," he told reporters.

"We want to show that Muslims in Malaysia can do things without being too emotional, but now these people go and demonstrate. This is stupid," Dr Mahathir said. -- BERNAMA

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