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No reason to declare an emergency: PM

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said there is no reason to declare a state of emergency following the arrest of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and others involved in organising street marches, mainly in the city, to back the former deputy prime minister's cause.

The situation in the country following Anwar's detention under the Internal Security Act (ISA) is under control.

"Of course a couple of thousand people are with him, but the vast majority of Malaysia's 22 million people are quite happy with the situation now," he told a news conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The Prime Minister was asked whether the Government will declare a state of emergency following mass street demonstrations last Sunday, which turned unruly in some places in the city. Anwar was detained on Sunday night for threatening national security.

"I don't think there is any cause for any emergency," Dr Mahathir said.

Marina Yusof, a former member of Umno, was quoted by AFP as saying that Dr Mahathir might declare an emergency "to further discredit Anwar supporters". She accused Dr Mahathir as a "revengeful person", as shown by the arrest of Umno Youth chief Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi in Kota Kinabalu.

Dr Mahathir said he will leave it to the party to determine Ahmad Zahid's position in Umno. "That will be determined by the party. I don't determine by myself," he said.

The Umno president said the police had arrested the Umno Youth chief for his involvement in organising illegal rallies. Several other Umno members have also been arrested for their involvement in illegal demonstrations.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Youth Movement of Malaysia (Abim) members were not involved in public disturbances which broke out two days ago, its assistant secretary-general, Yusri Mohamad said yesterday. Abim will explain to its members regarding the detention of their four leaders under the ISA, he said.

And in another development, the 20 elected members of the Umno Youth Malaysia executive committee said yesterday they have lost confidence in the head of the movement - Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

They signed a memorandum to this effect and will hand it over to Umno secretary-general Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik today.

They expressed disappointment over the attitude of Zahid in not "translating" the decision of the Umno Supreme Council to expel Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim from the party.

Meanwhile Brickfields deputy district police chief Supt Mohamed Salim Abbas yesterday met wife of former deputy prime minister Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail at her residence at Bukit Damansara, Kuala Lumpur.

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