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Mahathir-Riots

RIOTS UNEXPECTED BUT REPATRIATION TO CONTINUE- MAHATHIR

JITRA, March 27 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the rioting by illegal immigrants resisting repatriation yesterday was something quite unexpected but the government will continue with its deportation exercise.

He said the security forces had to act in self-defence and to quell the violence, started by the illegal immigrants who did not want to go back.

They used iron rods, sharpened wood and other weapons against the police.

"They attacked first and caused the death of a policeman. However the incident will not affect our decision to send them back," he said.

In the riots, Koprak Nasaruddin Yeop, 35, of the Federal Reserve Unit (FRU) riot police was killed and 30 others were injured including four seriously. Eight illegal immigrants were also killed.

Mahathir said repatriating the illegal immigrants was not easy as it involved security convoys and so on and this required a lot of money.

Asked whether Royal Malaysian Navy ships would be used to send home the illegal immigrants, he said this would be studied if the need arose. --

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