

22 JUL 2000

Mahathir-Explosion

NATIONAL SECURITY NOT AFFECTED BY BLAST IN KLANG

PUTRAJAYA, July 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the bomb explosion at Dataran Seni in Klang on Thursday did not affect national security.

Saying the security situation was good, he expressed confidence that such an incident would not spread to other places.

"But this is the type of humans we have; they are not concerned about people's lives. Setting off an explosion in a public place and someone becomes a victim...These people did not do anything to them...this is very cruel," he told reporters after opening the annual general meeting of Pusanita here.

He said this when asked to comment on the explosion which injured fruit stall worker Masrina Samagon, 42, on the left leg. The bomb went off near a park bench at Dataran Seni at about 9.50pm.

Asked whether the incident was linked to any opposition party, Dr Mahathir said: "I don't know...why should people explode bomb and that they are very anti-social."

Dr Mahathir said this kind of people criticised and accused the government of cruelty although the government only acted in accordance with the law.

"If there are laws applicable to their actions, then these laws must be invoked. We did not go and kill people who have not done anything wrong...but these people talk so much about cruelty and yet they are the ones so cruel," he said.

He said this group of people was prepared to torture and murder people, and this was evident from the actions of the Al-Ma'unah group which robbed two army camps in Gerik of weapons and then killed two security forces members whom they took hostage in Bukit Jenalek, Sauk.

Dr Mahathir said police detective Sjn Mohamed Shah Ahmad, who was also taken hostage but survived the ordeal, was tortured and repeatedly asked how many ulama he had killed.

He said any group unhappy with the government should wait for an election when they can then vote for the opposition instead of resorting to actions like setting off bombs.

Asked on PAS president Datuk Fadzil Nor's request that the government disclose the names of Al Ma'unah followers said to be PAS members, Dr Mahathir said police would do so once they had completed investigations.

"Police will release the names; they have the names. They have to investigate, (and) to get sufficient information...then only can clarify," he said.

He said DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang's statement that there were many more unanswered questions on the Sauk incident would also be answered once police completed their investigations.

-- BERNAMA

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