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No plans for Ops Lalang

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - The Prime Minister said today the Government has no plans to launch another Ops Lalang but warned that it will act to restore law and order if national security is threatened.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said although the situation now did not warrant a crackdown against any quarters, the Government would be pushed into taking action if "people no longer respect law and order".

"If this happens, then we will have to do something about it, not necessarily an Ops Lalang but something will have to be done," he said when asked to comment on the Opposition resorting to demonstrations and the racial tension following demands made by the Malaysian Chinese Organisation Election Appeals (Suqiu) and the Federation of Peninsula Malay Students (GPMS).

Suqiu has refused to withdraw its 83-point demands one of which calls for the abolition of special rights and privileges for Malays.

In response, GPMS submitted 100 demands to the Government, including one where it wanted the post of Prime Minister to be gazetted as an exclusive Malay right.

In late 1987, more than 100 people were detained under the Internal Security Act for activities detrimental to national security in a nationwide crackdown dubbed Ops Lalang.

The Prime Minister was speaking at a Press conference after presenting the MS ISO 9001 quality assurance certificate to Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Universiti Putra Malaysia in Serdang.

On GPMS' action, Dr Mahathir said he felt it was a direct reaction to demands made by Suqiu.

"Once you make demands, others will also make demands. After 43 years of independence, we have worked hard to bring all the races together and have reached a degree of harmony not found in other multi-racial countries in the world," he said.

"But when someone makes demands, it will provoke others to make a similar move ... so, we will be back to square one."

Asked for his advice to Suqiu and GPMS, he said: "Both should stop (making demands). In Malaysia, you cannot get everything you want. Everybody will have to sacrifice if we want to have peace."

On the Opposition resorting to holding demonstrations, Dr Mahathir said the whole idea was to disrupt the Government, a common phenomenon among developing countries.

They assumed that if they demonstrate by the tens of thousands, the police would be powerless to act and when arrested, it would be difficult for the rioters to be identified.

Dr Mahathir said in developed and democratic countries, after elections were over, the losers would stop campaigning and disrupting things but in developing countries, they would try to bring down the Government through demonstrations and riots.

Asked to comment on a statement by Pas president Datuk Fadzil Noor that democracy allowed demonstrations, Dr Mahathir replied there must be a reason to do so.

"But when everytime you lose something, you demonstrate, that is not right.

"Here we have an Opposition party represented in Parliament, controls two States and has every avenue to air its protest. They can do this but

instead resorted to demonstrating."

The Prime Minister said demonstrations would cause harm to lots of people and the country.

"Now, people are talking about the possibility of an Ops Lalang ... this will affect the investment climate and tourists. People in that business will suffer because of the action of these groups."

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