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Police will act against illegal rally, says DPM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Police will act against those who attend rallies which do not have police permits, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

He said although Malaysia practised democracy where people had the right to speak and associate with anyone, incidents sometimes occurred which violated the law.

"Sometimes in practising this freedom, incidents happen where passions run high and people forget (themselves) and in this situation actions take place that violate laws.

"This should not happen and surely police will take firm action not because they are angry but because of actions outside the law."

Abdullah, who is also Home Minister, was speaking to reporters after delivering a keynote address at the opening of "The Software Policy Summit 2000" meeting at a hotel here. He was asked about plans by Parti Keadilan Nasional to hold a rally on Saturday. Abdullah expressed hope the rally would not take place as a large gathering needed a police permit according to procedure.

"But if they still want to continue with other intentions and if there is an altercation, that is not good.

"That is not good for society because when there is an altercation involving many people, it turns into a riot. Riots are not wanted by anybody as they bring loss and ruin rather than benefit," he said.

On his advice to members of the public with regard to the gathering, he said: "Why attend? Why look for trouble?"

Yesterday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he had heard that Keadilan planned to hold a demonstration on Saturday to "remember something".

He said he saw a trend towards use of force by the Opposition in its political activities after being asked to comment on the alleged assault of two Umno grassroots leaders by Opposition supporters in Temerloh on Friday.

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