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Mahathir-Silat

SILAT ORGANISATIONS CAN CARRY ON ACTIVITIES, BUT NO DEVIATION

KUALA LUMPUR, July 21 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has given an assurance that the government will continue to allow silat organisations to carry on their activities as long as they do not deviate from their original objectives.

However, he said the government would continue to monitor the activities of such organisations to ensure that they did not carry out any act which could jeopardise national security.

"Organisations which are promoting the silat can continue with their activities, but if we receive information that there are other agendas apart from the silat then we will take action," said Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, at a media conference after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting at the party headquarters, here tonight.

The Prime Minister said that following the arms heist by the Al-Ma'unah group which led to the killing of two hostages in Bukit Jenalek, Sauk recently, the government was now more cautious with regard to the activities of such bodies.

"We can't wait until something happens before taking action...look at what happened when we relaxed.

"Actually when they (the Al-Ma'unah group) trained by using various tools and advertised in the Harakah so that people would join their movement, we treated such things lightly as though nothing was wrong...we now know that those activities led to something bad," he said.

Thus, he said, the government would monitor such movements more closely and seriously including their activities in instigating the people to commit violence.

"What is important is that we will monitor those who are keen on instigating the people to riot in the country, and we will ensure that this will not happen," he said.

Asked whether members of the Al-Ma'unah movement who were detained by the authorities would be charged under the Internal Security Act (ISA), Dr Mahathir said "it had still not been decided."

Nevertheless, he said, the ISA was the country's law and the government would not go against the law.

"We don't like to use (the ISA) but if we are forced to (do so) for the sake of national security and the people, we will not hesitate to use it especially against those who try to create chaos," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that the Sauk incident made the foreign journalists happy because they could portray to the world that there was violence in Malaysia which had been stable and peaceful all this while.

--BERNAMA

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