

# ISA used on seven activists to prevent violence, says Mahathir

SUN 13 APR 2001

By **Ferida Abdul Kudhus**  
ferida@thesundaily.com

**KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs:** The Internal Security Act had to be used to detain seven people over the last two days to prevent the outbreak of violence, says the prime minister.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said street demonstrations planned by the group would have resulted in violence.

"Police said that they have evidence that the group had planned to use explosives and the like. We don't want something to happen before we take any action," he said after

the launch of Silverfil, a silver dental filling, at the Technology Park Malaysia in Bukit Jalil.

Mahathir said that the police are not hoping to deal with huge demonstrations during the so-called "Black 14", which refers to April 14, 1999, the day former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

was jailed six years for corruption.

Asked why other laws were not used against the seven, whom police termed as militant-type *reformasi* activists, the prime minister said normal laws require certain evidence and procedures.

He said the government puts priority on the rights of the majority.

"The right of the masses to trade, live in peace in a stable environment, without pressure and riots ... that is also human rights.

"We cannot give priority to the rights of a few who have certain interests," he said.

To a question, he said it is up to police to produce the evidence they

have against the ISA detainees.

Asked about the group which comprises mostly opposition party members, Mahathir said: "We accept legitimate opposition ... people who use normal democratic procedures.

turn to **PAGE 4**

## Demonstrations and violence not part of democracy, says Mahathir

SUN 13 APR 2001

from **FRONT PAGE**

"We don't think demonstrations and the use of violence constitute democratic process."

To a question, he said that this latest incident shows that the ISA is still needed.

Those detained are Parti Keadilan Nasional Youth chief Mohd Ezam Mohd Nor, youth exco member Abdul Ghani Harun, vice-president Tian Chua, and supreme council member N. Gobalakrishnan, activist Hishamuddin Rais, Jemaah Islah Malaysia president Saari Sungib and "Free

Anwar" campaign director Raja Petra Raja Kamaruddin.

Yesterday, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Norian Mai said they are part of a 20-member group, comprising mainly *reformasi* activists, which has held 12 secret meetings in the city between Jan 6 and April 4.

Norian said the group planned to continue its struggle through the democratic process and use unconstitutional means, including militant-type activities such as street demonstrations, right up to the next general election, due in 2004.