

14 APR 2001

Mahathir-Gathering

GATHERING FAILED BECAUSE THERE WERE NO INSTIGATORS, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, April 14 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the illegal gathering dubbed "Black 14" failed to achieve its target of 50,000 participants because there were no more instigators.

He said that without instigators, Malaysians would not participate in such gathering because they were comfortable with a peaceful life.

"I think it is because they have no leaders to incite them...their leaders have been detained by police," he said when asked to comment on the failure of the gathering planned for today in front of the Malaysian Human Rights Commission (Suhakam) office in Jalan Raja Laut.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters after attending a Vasakhi open house in conjunction with the Sikh new year, organised by the National Sikh Organisations of Malaysia Coordinating Council, at Kelab Aman here.

He said the government's use of the Internal Security Act (ISA) to detain leaders or individuals who incited the people to act outside the law appeared to have been effective.

Seven people, including Parti Keadilan Nasional Youth chief Ezam Mohamed Noor and Keadilan vice-president Tian Chua, were detained under the ISA several days ago on suspicion of involvement in a secret group of over 20 reformasi activists set up to hold large-scale militant street demonstrations until the 2004 general election.

Dr Mahathir said: "That's why police took action, because these people want to demonstrate, there are parties inciting them, even hiring (them). So, that's why they do bad things."

Dr Mahathir said he had received information that certain parties had gone to Indonesian and told the people there that an Indonesian-style demonstration would be held in Malaysia.

"They (the organisers) proposed a gathering of 50,000 people and we learnt that they told certain people that they wanted to have it ala Indonesia, that is through violence. But (it) did not happen," he said.

-- BERNAMA

MS MAM JK