

29 MAR 2001

Mahathir-Visit

PM MAKES SURPRISE VISIT TO JALAN KLANG LAMA

PETALING JAYA, March 29 (Bernama) -- Taman Medan was again in the limelight today, not because of clashes between rival gangs, but because of the surprise visit by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to the settlement this evening.

He was attending a function with residents in the area which was originally meant for Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Norian Mai.

The function which was initially attended by about 200 residents, later drew more crowd when the residents realised that Dr Mahathir was present and the crowd soon swelled to more than 1,000 people.

Earlier this month, six people were killed following clashes between rival groups of residents in the area.

The residents met generally were happy that Dr Mahathir could spend time to visit them which showed the sense of responsibility inherent in the prime minister.

Normala Yaacoub, 32, from the newly built Long House, said she was so happy at the presence of the prime minister which showed that Dr Mahathir was deeply concerned about the situation there.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir told the people there not to be taken in by instigations by groups who were out to create chaos in the country.

He later visited the compound of the newly built Long House occupied by many Malays before proceeding to the KTM Long House which was occupied by many ethnic Indians.

Speaking to reporters after visiting the squatter areas, the prime minister said the situation had returned to normal.

Dr Mahathir said the purpose of his visit was to look at the background of the residents in the area.

"Most of them had stayed in the temporary homes for 14 years, so we took action immediately," he said.

Before the arrival of the prime minister, Norian spoke to the residents of Taman Medan and the surrounding areas at the Taman Medan playground.

He said patrols by members of the security forces in Taman Medan and several areas off Jalan Klang Lama would continue until the situation had truly returned to normal.

"I give an assurance that patrolling by police would not only be continued until the situation was truly back to normal but with the construction of the three police beat bases, there would be permanent deployment of police personnel to provide services to the local people," he said.

However, Norian said the number of police personnel there would be reduced gradually.

He also thanked the local residents as their cooperation had enabled the situation to return to normal within a short space of time.

-- BERNAMA

SHO AFY NJ AHH MAI AO