

'Emergency ordinance used as preventive measure'

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The detentions of several individuals under the Emergency (Public Order and Prevention of Crime) Ordinance 1969 suspected of being involved with subversive elements is to prevent more serious incidents from taking place.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak (left) said the arrests were to ensure peace and public order.

"This is a preventive measure, prevention is better than cure, what the police do is to prevent something more serious from taking place," he told reporters after opening the Pekan Umno division delegates meeting at Pekan today.

He was asked to comment on the detention of six individuals including the MP for Sungai Siput, Dr D Jeyakumar under the ordinance which was used for the first time against supporters of the illegal rally.

Najib said he was confident that the police understood all implications when taking any action against the supporters of the rally.

"Some people want us (government) to use whatever power at our disposal but I believe the police understand all the implications when they want to take any action, what is important is that any action must have the support of the people," he said.

He also said, the illegal rally invited exploitation from certain quarters. "There are several elements involved when there is a demonstration like this, some people want to take part so there is a chance they are communists, some are agitators, maybe there are those who join because they like unruly and wild situations which can rouse them," he said.

Najib said the group also tried to give the impression that the government was autocratic, dictatorial and not liberal because it rejected what they wanted to do.

"They will use the international media to portray the Malaysian government in a negative light if they provoke us to the extent that we are forced to use something which they can then interpret as being cruel to them.

"There are conditions to the freedom to assemble because we must protect peace and public order, the country will be heading towards anarchy and uncertainties which will not benefit anybody if we allow too much freedom," he said.

- Bernama