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PM: We have to be fair so as to ensure harmony

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■ By Azman Zakaria
news@nst.com.my

SUBANG: The government will use the Internal Security Act, if necessary, to prevent illegal demonstrations from disrupting the country's harmony, the prime minister said.

"If there is cause to use the ISA, we will use it," Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said at the Royal Malaysian Air Force base after his return from an official visit to Uganda and Egypt yesterday.

Abdullah, who is also Internal Security Minister, said the police would decide the next course of action as matters pertaining to national security were under their purview.

Asked if the ISA would be used against the Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) leaders behind the illegal assembly last Sunday, Abdullah said: "There is no need for me to provide conclusive details.

"The ISA is a preventive measure that can protect the country from serious disturbances of the peace. The ISA is still there and, when appropriate, will definitely be used."

On pressure from certain quarters for the government to put its foot down, including using the ISA, against street demonstrations, Abdullah said: "I don't think anyone

Envoy: We didn't get petition

KUALA LUMPUR: The British High Commission did not receive any petition from the Hindu Rights Action Force.

High Commissioner Boyd McCleary said: "We were not given anything physically."

Speaking after attending the Malaysia and UK Innovation seminar, he said al-

though the high commission had offered to accept the petition on Sunday, nothing was delivered to them.

Hindraf had claimed that it had faxed a petition to the high commission alleging marginalisation of the country's Indian community at 1.30pm on Sunday after it failed to present it to the commission.

wants us to use the ISA."

When asked about the possibility of other illegal assemblies next month, Abdullah said appropriate action would be taken with the government constantly reminding that street demonstrations could cause hardship to the rakyat.

On Hindraf's memorandum to the British government calling, among others, for an emergency resolution at the United Nations condemning what it claims as the "ethnic cleansing" of Indians in the country, Abdullah said: "If they want to poison the minds of the British, it is up to them."

Asked about Cameron Highlands MP S.K. Devamany's suggestion in parliament on

Monday that the demonstration showed government policies had failed to improve the lot of the Indian community, Abdullah said the government had to be fair to all.

"What is important is that the government has to be fair to all because if we concentrate only on one group, others will complain.

"We have to be fair in giving out opportunities to ensure the whole country develops and everyone can live in a peaceful, safe and harmonious country."

He also said the cabinet meeting today would discuss the setting up of the royal commission to investigate the "Lingam" video clip.