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Govt overreacted to China envoy issue: Dr M

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KUALA LUMPUR: The government had "overreacted" when it sought an explanation from Chinese Ambassador Dr Huang Huikang over his statements in relation to the red-shirt rally, former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad (*pix*) said.

He said Huang visited Petaling Street and was replying to questions raised by the media relating to racial issues and the red-shirt rally.

"I think the government overreacted to this. The relationship between Malaysia and China is far greater than just the words of the ambassador, who was concerned about racial issues promoted by the government," he told a press conference yesterday.

Mahathir said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak had made a speech recently at a National Silat Federation (Pesaka) event about Malay rights, which he said encouraged racism and violence.



"So they took the cue from there, to be violent against the so-called Chinese rally, when Bersih 4 was not Chinese; there were many Malays who joined," he said.

Pointing out that Bersih 4 called for Najib to step down and for a better election

mechanism, Mahathir stressed there was nothing racial about the rally.

"It was the government that translated it into a racial issue, as though Bersih 4 was a Chinese movement set to overthrow a Malay government, which is not true at all.

"They made it into a racial issue and then urged the Malays to have a demonstration," he said, referring to the red-shirt rally

planned for 14 taling Street last Saturday.

The rally was called off after police hauled in the organisers.

On Friday, Huang had visited Petaling Street and was reported as saying that China was against violence to disrupt public order.

Meanwhile, Tourism and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz said he had no intention of interfering in the affairs of Wisma Putra over the summoning of the ambassador, and admitted his mistake.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman had rebuked "a Cabinet colleague" for interfering in the affairs of his ministry.

Fuel price up 10 sen a litre

KUALA LUMPUR: The retail price for all fuel types has gone up by 10 sen a litre effective today. RON95 petrol is now retailed at RM2.05 per litre, RON97 petrol (RM2.45 per litre) and diesel (RM1.90 per litre).