

Peace prevails as security stepped up after temple chaos

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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 27 (Bernama) – Calm prevailed for most of the day following chaotic scenes at the Sri Maha Mariamman Temple in USJ 25, Putra Heights, Selangor as police beefed up security around the house of worship by deploying more personnel in the area.

They left nothing to chance as about 1,400 security personnel including those from the Federal Reserve Unit (FRU), policemen and traffic police were deployed at and around the Hindu temple tonight.

They made sure that trouble was nipped in the bud when they thwarted a group of men from approaching the temple at about 11.30 pm.

A total of 21 people have so far been detained in connection with the chaos that hit the temple grounds and its vicinity early Monday and in the wee hours of today.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad did not mince his words when he described the fracas as criminal in nature, vowing that the perpetrators would be dealt with severely according to the law.

In a statement on the temple incident, he drove home the point that there was no racial or religious element in the commotion although it was linked to the relocation of the temple.

Dr Mahathir also told reporters in Putrajaya tonight that outsiders masterminded Monday's riot at the temple.

“This is not about Malays versus Indians. This problem was caused by people who came from elsewhere. It's not local people,” he said.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department P. Waytha Moorthy, meanwhile, asserted that the temple issue was between the developer of the land where the temple was located and the temple management, and it should not be exploited and turned into a racial conflict.

The Malaysian Indian community, he said, should be calm and rational in handling the matter as some unscrupulous people were taking advantage of the situation to further complicate the matter by inciting social unrest.

Waytha Moorthy, who also holds the unity portfolio, also said the temple would not be demolished until a solution was reached.

He was among several leaders who visited the scene of the chaotic incidents that saw 23 vehicles being burned, a Fire and Rescue Department vehicle damaged and a firefighter gravely injured while a mob smashed glass panels of a building where the office of the developer who owns the land the temple is sited on is located.

The fireman in question is Muhammad Adib Mohd Kassim, 24, who is with the Fire and Rescue Department's Emergency Medical Response Service (EMRS).

In the incident early this morning, Muhammad Adib, who is from Kedah, was believed to have been attacked by rioters during an operation to put out several vehicles on fire outside the temple.

He initially received treatment at a private hospital in Subang Jaya before being transferred to the National Heart Institute late Tuesday.

The fireman, who suffered multiple injuries including broken ribs in the attack, received a string of visitors at the Subang Jaya hospital, including Communications and Multimedia Minister Gobind Singh Deo, Housing and Local Government Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin, Waytha Moorthy, Chief Secretary to the Government Datuk Seri Dr Ismail

Bakar, prime minister's political secretary Abu Bakar Yahya and Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Mohamad Fuzi Harun.

Meanwhile, Gobind advised social media users to exercise self-restraint when posting comments on the temple incident.

He reminded media members to give the victim's family some space and respect their privacy, besides practising extra caution in undertaking their duties.

On Oct 31, V. Ganabatirau, chairman of the Selangor State Socio-Economic Empowerment and Development and Caring Government Committee, said four parties, through a consent judgment on March 11, 2014, at the Shah Alam High Court, agreed to the relocation of the temple and return the present temple site vacant to the owner.

The four parties are the state government; owner of the temple site One City Development Sdn Bhd and two individuals claiming to be the temple administrators K. Chellappa and M. Nagaraju, he said. Chellappa filed an objection to the move by One City to take back the temple site in 1996.

Ganabatirau said that in the consent judgment, One City agreed to deposit RM1.5 million with the temple, and it is learned that the money had been deposited with the temple lawyer.

The state government handed over a 0.4-hectare piece of land, located about three kilometres away, for the relocation of the temple, he said.

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