

# Projects with approved EIA can go on: PM

By SHARIFF HAMID



DEVELOPMENT projects for which the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) has been approved by the Department of Environment will be allowed to go on, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said there is sufficient legislation in the country to ensure that environment is not affected by development projects and all developers have to abide by these laws.

"It is important for the country to have development projects but consideration must also be given to environmental factors."

The Prime Minister said the country has laws to ensure that an EIA be undertaken before any project is carried out. "Projects cannot be implemented without this assessment," he added.

Speaking to reporters after the ground breaking ceremony for Menara Kuala Lumpur at Bukit Nanas yesterday, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir who was responding to reporters' questions on the controversy over the proposed property development at Kampong Kemensah near Zoo Negara, said the Government cannot use as a guide, studies or reports of environmental effects carried out by parties which had not been commissioned to carry out such works.

"Sometimes those with vested interest may use the issue of environment for their own purpose. In implementing all major projects the Government will give serious consideration to the views of experts and it is essential that an EIA is carried out," he added.

When asked whether the development project near Zoo Negara will be allowed to continue, he said, it will depend on the EIA and whether it satisfies the legal requirements.

On the proposed Menara Kuala Lumpur, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the Government feels that a good telecommunications system is an important infrastructure for the nation's economic growth.

"Without good telecommunications foreign investors will not be interested to have their offices here since telecommunications is important to business," he said.

According to him, Telekom Malaysia need to provide high-speed telecommunications facilities for the needs of industry.

Apart from fulfilling the future telecommunications needs of the country, the Menara Kuala Lumpur, he said, can also serve as a tourist attraction. Although the tower will be costly, its long-term benefits are immense, he added.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also said Malaysia will again raise the question of the future of the Commonwealth at the grouping's heads of government meeting (CHOGM) in Harare, Zimbabwe, on October 15.

He said Malaysia also wanted to raise the question of the environment which he felt might be tied to aid.