

PM: Environmental factors to be given consideration

Growth projects vital *for country

By K.P. Waran

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Development projects for which the Environmental Impact Assessments have been approved by the Department of Environment (DOE) will be allowed to go on, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

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

Speaking to reporters after the ground breaking ceremony for the Kuala Lumpur Tower, which is expected to cost over \$250 million, at Bukit Nanas, Dr Mahathir said:

"It is important for the country to have development projects and for environmental factors to be given due consideration.

"We have laws in the country to ensure that the Environmental Impact Assessment is done before any project is carried out. Projects cannot be implemented without this assess-

ment."

Dr Mahathir was responding to reporters' questions on the controversy over the proposed property development at Kampong Kemensah near Zoo Negara in Ulu Klang.

He said the government could not use as a guide, studies or reports of environmental effects carried out by parties which have not been commissioned to carry out such work.

He said sometimes those with vested interests might use the issue of environment for their own purpose.

The Prime Minister said in implementing all major development projects, the government would give serious consideration to views of experts in the field, adding that it was essential that EIAs were carried out.

Asked whether the development project near Zoo Negara would be allowed to continue, he said, it would depend on the DOE's assessment of the environmental impact and whether the legal requirements have been satisfied.

On the proposed Kuala Lumpur Tower, the third

tallest communications tower in the world designed to serve the country's telecommunications needs, Dr Mahathir said the government felt that a good telecommunications system was an important infrastructure for the nation's economic growth.

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

"Svarikat Teikom Malaysia needs to provide high-speed telecommunication facilities for the needs of industry," he said.

He said with the proposed Kuala Lumpur Tower, the future telecommunications needs of the country would be fulfilled.

The tower can also serve as tourist attraction apart from being used to hold exhibitions and other events.

Dr Mahathir said although the tower would be costly to construct its long-term benefits were immense.

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