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MAHATHIR: GOVERNMENT WILL ABIDE BY COURT ORDER

Mahathir-court

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ALOR SETAR, Oct 10, (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the government will abide by the decision of the Pulau Pinang High Court ordering Woodhouse Sdn Bhd and the Langkawi Development Authority (Lada) to temporarily cease construction of a hotel on two lots of land owned by a woman resident of the island.

Construction works on the lots concerned had been halted but work on another lot of land not affected by the court order was continuing, he added.

Judicial Commissioner Datuk Abdul Hamid Mohamed, in his decision on Tuesday, also ordered Woodhouse Sdn Bhd and Lada to demolish and remove the structures that had been erected by them on the two lots of land.

The suit was filed by Puan Soadah Mohamed Noh, the owner of lots 212 and 214 in the Mukim of Padang Matsirat, Langkawi.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir told reporters at the Sultan Abdul Halim Airport here on his arrival from Langkawi that the government would try to resolve the matter through legal means. -- more

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The government would institute action to set aside the court order as the restriction imposed could adversely affect the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (Lima) to be held in Langkawi next month. Its failure would be an embarrassment to the country.

+If we fail, the guests would have no accomodation and the world will lose respect for us,+ he added.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir was very disappointed that there were Langkawi residents who did not have any sense of responsibility whatsoever in preserving the country's pride.

He was sure that the action taken was a result of instigation by so-called environmental groups.

+They frequent Langkawi to provoke the Langkawi residents to make a failure of the government project so that the people in Langkawi will continue to remain backward. Unfortunately, there are people who listen to these people,+ he said. -- more

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He said that the woman jointly owned the piece of land with others who had already received their payments.

The Prime Minister declined to reveal the amount paid to them but said that the price of the land was higher than the price of land in Pulau Pinang.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also said that the government would pay if necessary to settle the dispute.

He was also unhappy over the attitude of some Langkawi landowners who received huge compensations but refused to acknowledge the fact that the increase in price of land was because the government had invested a lot of money to develop the island.

So far, he added, the government had spent \$500 million in Langkawi and turned it into a duty-free port.

+Actually, they should not make demands for absurd payments so much so that the price of land in Langkawi is higher than that in Pulau Pinang,+ he said.-- more

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+And they are so adamant, some of them about to brandish a parang,+ he added.

He said that the residents in Langkawi should be grateful of the benefits they were enjoying and not take action like suing the government merely on being instigated by certain groups.

+I am really sad over such an attitude. We want to bring development but they seem to want to pressurise the government that is trying to help them,+ he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who made a brief visit to Langkawi to inspect preparations for the LIMA exhibition, said it had received favourable response from abroad.

LIMA, initially planned to be held on a small-scale, would turn out to be a huge one with the participation of agencies from the United States, Soviet Union, France, Britain, Australia and Japan, he added. -- Bernama

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