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NO TALKS ON PERGAU IF THERE'S PRESSURE, SAYS DR M

Mahathir - Pergau

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KUALA LUMPUR, July 9<sup>9</sup> (Bernama) -- The federal government cannot discuss the \$1.3 billion Pergau hydro-electric project with the Kelantan government if there is pressure, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today,

+We can't talk at this time as we can't negotiate under pressure,+ he told reporters after attending a closed-door dialogue with academicians at Pusat Islam here.

He was approached by reporters for comments on whether the reported seizure of four Tenaga Nasional vehicles by state authorities had diminished prospects for negotiations between both governments on the project.

The Kelantan authorities had reportedly seized the ignition keys of the vehicles and stopped them from carrying rocks in the project area two days ago.

The Prime Minister said if the reports were true, then such an action by the state authorities was wrong as+ we cannot touch other people's property.+

Last Saturday, the state government blocked two of the four routes to the project site and refused to dismantle the barricades until the federal government pay up the \$90-million compensation it had demanded.-- more

▼09/07/16-41MST

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The Prime Minister also commented on Kelantan Menteri Besar Haji Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat's statement that the blockades were to signal a warning to the federal government to immediately sign the official agreement on the project.

Dr Mahathir said:+ I don't know whether that is true...but what I do know is that he had asked for a meeting with Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim. The appointment was fixed but he did not turn up.+ -- Bernama

▼09/07/16-53MST

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