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R GE 26-12 00205 EB880

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Attn Editors: Urgent. correction to second para. Herewith the corrected rptn.

Mahathir-building

GOVT MAY INTRODUCE A NEW LAW, SAYS MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 26 (Bernama) -- A law may be introduced to ensure that construction firms abide by directives made by the government, Prime Minister ⁹³ ~~Datuk Seri~~ ⁰ Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

This would be done if studies showed that existing laws did not empower the government to act against construction firms which refused to follow directives to stop building work.

Such action was necessary to ensure that interest of the public was not neglected, he said when asked to comment on defiance by construction firms to cease work on all high-rise projects on hillslopes as directed by the cabinet on Wednesday.

"I feel very bad. They're being insensitive and have no sense of responsibility at all... They seem to be possessed by greed," he told reporters on his return after a three-day unofficial visit to Labuan at the Royal Malaysian Air Force (TUDM) Station in Sungai Besi here.

Dr Mahathir said that what was important now was to stop these projects as soon as possible. --more.

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▼26/12/21-22MST

CNS6946

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"Right now, we don't have the time to determine who has and who hasn't the authority... (to take action against construction firms concerned)," he said.

He said that as long as the government had doubt about the safety and stability of high-rise projects, it would continue to impose a freeze on their construction.

The cabinet had on Wednesday agreed to allow developers to continue work on such projects if accredited consultants vouched for their stability and safety.

Asked aren't construction firms concerned had the moral obligation to stop work when told to do so, Dr Mahathir said: "Some developers have moral, some don't. That's why we now have problems".

"They don't follow regulations and standards... like mixing concrete not to the required standard. These things happen. That's why we have buildings collapsing," he said. --Bernama

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▼26/12/20-31MST