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Mahathir-Toxic

DEVELOPED COUNTRIES SHOULD NOT OPPOSE TOTAL BAN ON TOXIC WASTE DUMPING
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 23 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the industrialised countries should not obstruct any efforts to impose a total ban on the dumping of toxic waste in Third World countries, particularly Asia.

The Prime Minister said that those countries should, in fact, take steps to ban the export of toxic waste to developing countries.

"I feel that toxic waste should not be exported to developing countries because this should not be something that a civilised county does," he told reporters after visiting the Kuala Lumpur Tower project in Bukit Nanas, here.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on the claim by Greenpeace, an environmental protection group, that seven industrialised countries opposed efforts to impose a total ban on the export of toxic waste to Third World countries.

The countries were Australia, Britain, Canada, Germany, Holland, Japan and the United States. -- more

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The "Greenpeace" claim was made as representatives from 64 countries which were signatories of the 1989 Convention on the transfer and disposal of hazardous toxic waste gathered for a meeting at the United Nations in New York.

Under the convention, signatory countries were required to reduce the production of toxic waste and refrain from dumping the waste in other countries.

According to "Greenpeace", Denmark and other developing countries attending the meeting had called for a ban on the export of toxic waste from 24 OECD countries.

Dr Mahathir said he hoped the seven industrialised countries mentioned would accept whatever decisions made to ban exports of toxic waste to developing countries.

"They should by right dispose of the toxic waste in their own country or make efforts to reduce production of toxic waste," he added.

Speaking about the tower project, Dr Mahathir said he was satisfied with the progress so far.

He was told that the 421-metre tall tower, costing RM250 million, would be completed on schedule in 1996.

"I am impressed by the method of construction which is unique and has not been used in Malaysia before. I believe this method should be learned by our engineers and contractors," he said.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir was briefed on the progress of the project to-date by Martin Heima, the Technical Director of Wayss & Freytag (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd., the construction company.

Also present were Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat and other members of the Cabinet and Kuala Lumpur Datuk Bandar Datuk Mazlan Ahmad.

Reporters and cameramen were given the opportunity to visit the top of the tower from where they got a panoramic view of the city.

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