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Mahathir-aliens

DEMOLISHMENT OF ILLEGAL FOREIGNERS SETTLEMENTS

KUALA LUMPUR, March 24 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the authorities demolished illegal foreigners settlements in this country to uphold justice.

Defending the state governments' move to tear down illegal Indonesian settlements, he said there was absolutely no intention to offend anyone much less affect ties with the republic.

"We are still of the same stock and race (serumpun bangsa)," he told reporters at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang, near here, after sending off Polish Prime Minister Dr Wlodzimierz Cimoszewicz.

The question of "serumpun sebangsa" and the demolishments were raised yesterday in Citra Nusantara, a television programme jointly hosted by TV3 dan Rajawali Citra Televisi Indonesia (RCTI).

The Selangor government demolished one Indonesian settlement yesterday while some other states including Melaka and Johor are expected to take similar action soon.

Last Monday, Dr Mahathir told state governments to act against foreigners settlements if they were established illegally.

He criticised local authorities for their slowness in dealing with the illegal settlement problem, resulting in the settlements becoming big.

Asked by reporters today if the government's action would affect ties between Malaysia and Indonesia, Dr Mahathir said the action taken by the authorities was similar to that usually taken against Malaysians who occupied government land illegally.

"If we tear down squatter houses of our own people, surely other nationals won't be exempted," he said.

However, state governments had been directed to be careful when acting against illegal foreigners settlements, he added. -- Bernama

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