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Dr M confirms receiving letter from Hun Sen

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday confirmed receiving a letter from Cambodian co-Prime Minister Hun Sen.

In the letter, Hun Sen reassured him that "there is no problem in (Cambodia)."

Hun Sen's letter was said to be in reference to a wire newsreports saying that First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh had declared three Cambodian deals with Malaysia's Ariston Sdn Bhd as "null and void".

Speaking to reporters after meeting German President Roman Herzog in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, Dr Mahathir said:

"Yes, I have received the letter from him, giving an assurance that there is no problem there. It is only their internal problem and we believe that the problem can be solved by them."

According to the newsreports, Hun Sen wrote to Dr Mahathir on March 17 to say that Ariston had become "a victim of politics and irresponsible behaviour by Ranariddh".

Hun Sen also said that the head of state of a country cannot unilaterally make a hasty decision without going through the proper legal and judicial procedures.

He also assured Dr Mahathir that the deals with Ariston, Cambodia's largest investor, are still legitimate, according to the newsreports.

Dr Mahathir, commenting further, expressed his hope that the problems in Cambodia will be resolved soon.

"I think the leadership is a responsible one but, of course, they have different opinions, just like other states."

In a letter dated February 26 to Ariston chief executive officer Chen Lip Keong, Ranariddh said Ariston's deals to lease land for a large resort and an 18-hole golf course and an airport concession agreement were null and void because they were "improperly signed by a rival politician".

The agreements are part of Ariston's US\$1.3 billion (US\$1 = RM2.47) plan to develop the southern town of Sihanoukville into a major tourist destination.

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