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Mahathir-Residence

DR MAHATHIR TO LOOK INTO SELANGOR MB'S RESIDENCE CASE

LANGKAWI, Dec 3 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today there must be a reason for spending RM5 million on renovating the Selangor Menteri Besar's official residence in Shah Alam.

Dr Mahathir said he would look into what was it that cost so much.

He said Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Abu Hassan Omar had already explained to him the need for the renovation before the Menteri Besar left for an overseas trip.

Dr Mahathir said this when reporters approached him on a front-page report in a local Malay daily today about the renovation.

The news report quoted Selangor senior state executive councillor Datuk Zainal Dahalan as saying that the renovation was funded with an allocation from the Menteri Besar's Department and state secretary office.

The report quoted Zainal as saying that the state executive council had approved the allocations for the renovation.

The Prime Minister was taking a fleet review of military and commercial vessels taking part in the maritime segment of the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA '97) in Tanjung Malai here.

Dr Mahathir said Abu Hassan informed him that "the whole thing" (Menteri Besar's residence) was in shambles".

"He is staying in KL and he will move in (into the Menteri Besar's residence).

"This was a decision made before all these problems (current economic problem)," the Prime Minister said.

Asked if the renovation had involved a lot of money, Dr Mahathir said he could not say whether this was so or otherwise.

"You see, we are poor now. People have stolen RM30 billion of our money now," he said referring to the currency and stock market setbacks caused by speculators and manipulators.

"So we have to live within our means," Dr Mahathir said.

Asked if he would be getting a report on the matter, he said: "We will find out."

When approached by reporters at a separate function earlier, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said he would ask for explanation on the matter.

He said he would get feedback from Abu Hassan before making any statement.

The news report said that the official residence was built in 1974 and occupied by past menteris besar -- Datuk Hormat Rafie, Datuk Ahmad Razali Mohamad Ali and Tan Sri Muhammad Muhd Taib. -- BERNAMA

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