

27 MAR 1997

Court-Logs

NO OFFENCES COMMITTED IN TAWAU'S LOGS CASE, COURT TOLD

TAWAU, March 27 (Bernama) -- The Magistrate's Court here was told today that no offences were committed in connection with the logs seized by the Forestry Department in waters near Sebatik Island off here in January.

Senior Federal Counsel Nurcahaya Arshad told Magistrate Egusra Ali that police investigations into the matter had been completed and they found that no offences were committed.

Nurcahaya, who was assisted by Zahir Shah, also applied to the court for the 3,307 logs seized to be disposed of in accordance with Section 413 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

She made the application on the grounds that the police have no facilities to look after the exhibits for a prolonged period as the exhibits are of perishable nature and the owner, who could be traced, requires them.

Nurcahaya also applied to have two tugboats, two barges and a crane, which were seized along with the logs, to be disposed of.

Informing the court that Syarikat Raspond is the only claimant for the logs and the other exhibits, she applied for an inquiry to be held to determine who is entitled to possession of the exhibits and for the police to assist in the inquiry.

Syarikat Raspond, which was represented by counsel Sugumar Balakrishnan and Poh Ping, sought an early date for the inquiry on the grounds that the logs are of perishable nature.

"Since the seizure, the condition of the logs have deteriorated greatly," Sugumar said, adding that he had no objections to the police assisting in the inquiry.

Magistrate Egusra Ali then ordered the inquiry to be held for two days beginning Monday.

The logs were seized by the Forestry Department on Jan 18 on suspicion that they were being exported without permission.

Apart from the police, the Anti Corruption Agency was also called in to carry out an investigation, in addition, a high-powered committee was formed by the state government to investigate the matter and it had submitted its report to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Jan 28. -- BERNAMA

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