'HOT DONE IN MALICE'

LTTE ARRESTS FOLLOWED THE LAW, SAYS PM

I will sit down with police to ensure due diligence was done, says Dr Mahathir

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Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad listening to a briefing by Langkawi Development Authority Geopark division manager Azmil Munif Mohd Bokhari in Langkawi yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

THE arrests of 12 people, including two DAP assemblymen, over their suspected ties to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) group, was done in accordance with the law.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the arrests were done without any interference from his administration, and there was no malice involved.

"The arrests of the 12 individuals, including two DAP politicians, were not done in malice.

"I will, however, sit down with police to ensure that there was due diligence because we do not want to abuse our powers."

He rejected claims that the arrests were made to weaken specific quarters.

"The government wants to know why this matter is happening. We don't like to use power to weaken any quarter.

"It is not me who nabbed these people, not (Home Minister Tan Sri) Muhyiddin (Yassin) who nabbed them, (but) the police.

"The arrests by their officers were in accordance with the law," he said after attending a briefing on Langkawi's development here yesterday.

Police on Saturday detained five more people, including a teacher on suspicion of promoting, supporting, possessing materials and channelling funds linked to LTTE.

On Thursday, seven people, including two state assemblymen were detained under the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 in connection with the same investigation.

Dr Mahathir, who is Langkawi member of parliament, said he would determine if the arrests could affect Pakatan Harapan, which would be contesting the Tanjung Piai by-election soon.

Dr Mahathir was also asked about the threat of India boycotting Malaysian palm oil following his comments on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir during the 74th United Nations General Assembly last month.

Dr Mahathir's comments were deemed to be critical of India. His remarks started a #BoycottMalaysia movement by Twitter users in India.

Users of the hashtag urged Indian citizens not to travel to Malaysia and complained about the government's interference in India's internal affairs.

"We shall see how India acts first because we have a two-way trade with them. India also sells their products to us.

"We should avoid a trade war because it will not bring any good to the two countries."

Dr Mahathir also touched on the decision to lower the threshold on high-rise property prices in urban areas for foreign ownership from RM1 million to RM600,000, as announced in the 2020 Budget.

He said the move was meant to reduce the overhang of condominiums and apartments and it did not mean that foreigners who bought properties would be granted Malaysian citizenship.

"If locals want to buy the property, they can buy it at the same (reduced) price, but we still have supply overhang. We have built so many houses, but they were not sold. When a housing project is not sold. It leads the country to suffer losses.

"We want to get rid of this property overhang so that we can raise the price back to RM800,000. RM1 million or RM2 million. This is a way to encourage the sale.

"But if foreigners buy the property, we will not give them Malaysian citizenship. They can only use it as their holiday home."