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Megat-Dadah

DANGEROUS DRUGS ACT TO BE AMENDED TO INCLUDE WHIPPING

MUADZAM SHAH, Aug 24 (Bernama) -- The Dangerous Drugs Act 1952 is to be amended to provide greater control on inmates of dadah rehabilitation centres, Deputy Home Minister Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayub said today.

He said the National Dadah Council at its meeting chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad two days ago had recommended several proposals for consideration.

They included mandatory whipping for inmates caught for escaping as well as rehabilitation centre staff convicted of supplying dadah to inmates, he told reporters after a meeting with Rompin Division Rela in Bandar Tun Razak, Keratong, here.

Megat Junid said there were also proposals to set up halfway houses near factories to enable women factory workers to go back to work after they were rehabilitated and special centres for dadah addicts who surrendered and volunteered to undergo rehabilitation.

Another proposal was to introduce naltroxone pills for the treatment of 2,000 of the 17,000 dadah addicts in rehabilitation centres in the country, he said.

Megat Junid said the National Dadah Council also proposed disqualifying dadah addicts from having international passports but consideration could be given depending on certain cases.

He said the government could no longer tolerate cases of inmates going on riots after all it did to help them to kick their habits.

Dadah abuse is a major problem where addicts were believed to have spent some RM1,000 million a year, he said.

On illegal immigrants, he said directive had been issued to arrest those who did not register with the Immigration Department.

Since the registration exercise started on July 1, only some 20,000 immigrants had responded while many more especially among the construction workers and housemaids had not done so, he said.

On allegation by former convict Aaron Shelton Cohen, 29, of dadah being smuggled into prison, he said the problem was not that serious in Malaysia.

He said in other countries like Holland and Great Britain, the prisoners could even exchange syringes, proving that they too got supply of dadah in prisons.

"It's not fair to pick on Malaysia when others who did worse thing, like an Australian company in Papua New Guinea, but nobody gives a hoot," he said.

Cohen, in an interview with Woman's Day magazine, claimed to obtain almost daily supply of heroin while in Pulau Pinang prison.

Cohen and his mother, Lorraine Phyllis Cohen, 53, who were serving life sentence for dadah offences, were free on June 29 after being pardoned by the Pardon Board. -- BERNAMA

ROS ABG