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Megat-Prisons

FIVE MORE PRISONS TO BE RELOCATED OUTSIDE TOWN

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 1 (Bernama) -- Five more prisons after the Pudu Prison here have been earmarked for relocation to the rural areas.

Deputy Home Minister Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayob said the relocation would be carried under the current Seventh Malaysia Plan (7MP).

New prisons had been planned for construction in Sarawak, Pulau Pinang, Melaka, Johor and Kedah for the purpose, he told reporters during a visit to the Sungai Buloh Prison, here today following the completion of the operation to move out 1,580 prisoners from the Pudu Prison.

The Pudu Prison was officially closed at 9am today. Megat Junid given a tour of the newly built prison located 32km from here by Prisons Director-General Datuk Zaman Khan.

Megat Junid said the Prisons Department had introduced on trial basis a new concept where the prisoners would meet visiting relatives in the open or in the park within the prison's compound.

"There is also no need for the prisoners to change their uniforms for the meeting. However, sex is still prohibited," he said.

He said for a start, it would be implemented in Sungai Buloh Prison and if proved successful the concept would be extended to prisons throughout the country.

"It's our efforts to improve the condition in prisons. I've also directed for more recreational areas to be set up and more frequent religious ceramahs be conducted for the prisoners," he said.

On the Pudu Prison, he said he had suggested to the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that the public be allowed access to it before the demolition work started.

"The land has been given to UDA (Holdings Sdn Bhd) but as far as I know, there is no concrete plan as yet to develop it. So, before the prison is demolished, I think it will be a good thing if we clean it up and open it to the public," he said.

Megat Junid said several structures of the Pudu Prison like the main arch might be left to stand as a historical landmark. -- BERNAMA

AZH ABG