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Najib-graft

CORRUPTION NOT UMNO CULTURE, SAYS NAJIB

KUALA LUMPUR, June 1 (Bernama) -- Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today the party is not sparing any effort to ensure corruption does not become a part of the Umno or Malaysian culture.

"Umno rejects the corrupt way in electing leaders, in making decisions or a pre-requisite for any undertaking," Najib told reporters after taking part in TV3's "Cermin Diri" talk-show carried live from the Dewan Bahasa and Pustaka here.

Najib, who is also Education Minister, was approached to comment on yesterday's detention of a former Melaka state executive councillor by the Anti-Corruption Agency for alleged corrupt practices linked to a state land approval.

Umno, Najib said, put clean and selfless leaders first.

However, he would not make any conclusions from the councillor's detention saying he would let the law take its own course.

"After all it's all only allegations. Moreover, we can't say a person is guilty until his conviction," Najib said

ACA head of investigations Nordin Ismail said in Melaka yesterday the former executive councillor will be charged in the Sessions Court there tomorrow.

Najib said weeding out corruption completely was no easy task but the menace could be minimised so that it would not be ingrained into the Malaysian culture.

He said corruption, which could not be completely wiped out, transcends borders and occurred even in developed countries such Japan, South Korea and the United States.

In this context, he said, the curriculum to be drawn up for the proposed Umno training centre would emphasise on values and virtues in upholding the party cause.

"Obviously we'll be stressing on honesty and trustworthiness, and what is meant by clean and honest leaders," Najib said.

The curriculum proper was being formulated but the basics, listed down by party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, were already in place, he said.

Values espoused by Dr Mahathir in his various speeches would form the basis of the proposed centre's curriculum, Najib added.

Meanwhile in KEPALA BATAS, Pulau Pinang, another Umno vice-president Datuk Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi did not rule out the possibility of Thursday's meeting of the Umno Supreme Council discussing the ACA's arrest of the former Melaka executive councillor.

Abdullah, who is Foreign Minister, said since the former councillor would reportedly be charged in court tomorrow, the Umno Supreme Council would have until June 5 to decide whether or not to discuss the former councillor's case.

He told reporters it was up to Acting Prime Minister and party deputy president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who is also chairman of the party's disciplinary committee, to make the decision.

In ALOR GAJAH, Melaka Chief Minister Datuk Abu Zahar Isnin said the arrest of the former executive councillor was proof of the government's firmness in dealing with administrative malpractices.

"The public can judge from the action taken and the course that the law takes whether the government is positive or negative in its approach," he

told reporters when asked to comment on the matter.

Commenting on the same subject, DAP deputy secretary-general Lim Guan Eng hoped Abu Zahar would not hesitate to drop executive council members suspected of corruption or those with personal agenda so as to maintain a clean image of the state government.-- BERNAMA

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