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Megat-ISA

PERIOD OF DETENTION UNDER ISA MAY BE SHORTENED, SAYS MEGAT JUNID

KUALA LUMPUR, May 28 (Bernama) -- The current two-year detention under the Internal Security Act (ISA) may be reduced to six months, depending on the type of offence and period of rehabilitation, Deputy Home Minister Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob said today.

He said that if the ministry felt that the offence committed by an ISA detainee was not that serious and the period of rehabilitation adequate, a detainee might only have to serve six months.

The ministry was still studying the matter and would discuss it with the Attorney-General before any decision was taken, he told reporters after opening a meeting of the working group of the Asian Crime Prevention Foundation, here.

This is Megat Junid's last function as Deputy Home Minister. His appointment as Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister was announced by Acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today.

Megat Junid said the guidelines given by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad it did not involve much changes to the Act except for the period of detention.

He also said that foreign tourists whose urine samples tested positive for drugs at the border checkpoints would not be allowed into the country at the border checkpoints to check drug abuse.

He said most urine tests were made on Malaysians leaving for neighbouring countries and re-entering Malaysia but in Rantau Panjang urine tests were also conducted on foreigners.

"Conducting urine tests on foreigners in Rantau Panjang has been found to be effective as many foreigners were not permitted in after testing positive," he said.

There are four machines to test urine which can detect the type of drugs taken by an individual in three minutes at Padang Besar, Kayu Hitam, Rantau Panjang and Pengkalan Kubur.

More machines would be added at the entry points if required, he said.

In another development, Megat Junid said the ministry had directed the Immigration Department to study the renewal of visas for foreigners who applied for renewal more than five times in a year.

"We know the visa is not for visit but to work here and that is why they prefer to renew the visas than to extend the period of stay.

"If the visa is extended they can only be in the country for two weeks but renewing the visa will enable them to stay for three months and why do they enter and leave the country so many times a year -- there must be something behind it," he said. -- BERNAMA

ZAI MTA JK