

06/12/1997

PM to get report on renovation to MB's house

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SHAH ALAM, Fri. - Menteri Besar Datuk Abu Hassan Omar said today he would submit a report on the RM5 million allocation to renovate his official residence at Bukit Megawati here to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad next week.

The report is being prepared by the Public Works Department.

He said if the matter was laid to rest after his explanation to the State Assembly yesterday he would move into the official residence before Christmas.

However, he added if the matter was "still being raised" he was not sure if he would move in.

"I will be on leave during the (Christmas) period and thus I can take the opportunity to move from my house in Ampang Jaya to Bukit Megawati," he told the New Straits Times when met during a break in the State Assembly.

Abu Hassan said he was glad the newspapers had highlighted his explanation on the approval of the RM5 million.

"Its for the people to make the judgment," he added.

Later he told reporters imported material used in the renovation had cost an estimated RM2 million and accounted for 10 per cent of all the materials used.

He said the PWD had said these items had to be imported as they were not available locally.

He added the successful contractor was shortlisted from an initial list of four contractors.

"We have not paid even a single sen to the contractor for the renovation work as the project was done on a turnkey basis," he added.

This means payment will only be made after the project is finished. The renovation was completed at the end of September.

Earlier in the State Assembly, he thanked Barisan Nasional Assemblymen for endorsing the RM5 million allocation.

Yesterday he told the Assembly the RM5 million allocation had been discussed and approved by the State Executive Council and other department heads.

He had said the State Government had no cause for worry as the allocation was above board.

Abu Hassan had explained that when the State PWD informed him the renovation would cost between RM4.5 to RM5 million, he felt it was too high and had sought the views of the Exco members and head of departments.

Asked to comment on Wednesday, Dr Mahathir had said Abu Hassan had told him he did not move into the official residence after being appointed Menteri Besar as "the whole thing was a shambles".

Abu Hassan, 53, took over the post from Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib. He was sworn in on June 6.

Yesterday, Abu Hassan told the Assembly the auditor-general and the Anti-Corruption Agency were free to investigate the matter if they wished.

While debating the 1998 Development Budget of RM455,108,475, at the State Assembly today, Teng Chang Khim (DAP-Bukit Gasing) said the DAP would lodge a report with the ACA to investigate the RM5 million allocation.

"I feel the auditor-general and the ACA should investigate (to see) if there is corruption. I also feel the State Government should form an

internal inquiry committee to investigate the matter," he added.

At this juncture, Datuk Mohd Zin Mohamed (BN-Sungai Renggam) said: "The subject is closed. Let's move on with other issues."

Teng: "For BN the matter is closed, but for the DAP it is not. We still want to know in detail how much was spent for carpets, furniture, curtains etc. Even Datuk Abu Hassan felt the amount was high."

Teng later told reporters he would make the report to the ACA tomorrow.

In IPOH, ACA director-general Datuk Shafee Yahaya said today the agency was "looking into" the RM5 million allocation.

"I am expecting a report from my officers next week," he said, adding to date no complaint had been received on the matter.

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