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Politicians urged to be conversant with local, foreign laws

PENANG, Wed. - The Penang Youth Council today urged leaders and politicians to have a proper understanding of Malaysian and foreign laws so that they do not tarnish the image of the country by breaking the laws.

Its secretary Mohd Haniffa Hamid said today it was incumbent upon all politicians and leaders to be well-versed in Malaysian law and if they travelled overseas, be aware of laws of the land which they were visiting.

He was commenting on the case of Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib who was charged in the Brisbane magistrate's court on Dec 23 with failing to declare an equivalent of RM2.37 million as he was about to leave for New Zealand, a day earlier.

Under Australian law, anyone leaving the country with more than A\$5,000 (RM9,500) in cash must make a declaration.

"Malaysian politicians, whether from the Government or opposition should be aware of the rules and regulations of our country and foreign countries which they intend to visit.

"Malaysia is riding high in terms of international respect due largely to the untiring efforts of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and we should all be careful not to jeopardise our good standing. We must have integrity and be morally upright. It is very important that leaders and politicians realise this and conduct themselves properly, especially when they are overseas."

Mohd Haniffa said leaders should set a good example for the people.

"If they always keep this in mind, we can do better and improve our standing in the eyes of Malaysians and the rest of the world."

In Kuala Lumpur, DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang said Muhammad's explanation that the cash he was carrying was meant for the purchase of property in Gold Coast for his children and relatives to pursue their education in Australia had raised eyebrows.

"In Australia, the good colleges are in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth while the Gold Coast is a tourist and investment centre," he said in a statement.

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