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### Ignore rumours, Ong tells public

IPOH, Sun. - The public has been asked to ignore rumours spread by irresponsible people about the country's economic situation.

They should instead check the facts before arriving at any conclusion.

Deputy Home Minister Datuk Ong Ka Ting said the public should not be taken in easily by rumour mongers.

"Whether or not the country is facing economic problems, rumours will still exist," he told reporters after an economic forum jointly organised by Perak MCA, Perak Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Perak Chinese Assembly Hall today.

The Government was taking steps to explain to the people the economic problems, and listening to rumours would not help the situation.

Ong said the public should "screen" the rumours and should not believe or accept them at once.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had repeatedly given explanations and assurances about the situation.

Ong was commenting on a statement released by the Federal police recently that certain groups were spreading rumours to worsen the country's and the region's economic situation.

According to police, these groups had also indulged in spreading false news about the instability of local banks.

These caused many depositors to withdraw money from the banks.

The statement also said police could take action against rumour mongers under the Internal Security Act 1969, the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984 and the Sedition Act 1948.

"The leaders' explanations are valid ... and is the best way to quell the rumours."

Ong declined to elaborate when asked whether police had identified the rumour mongers.

The forum aimed to provide a clearer picture of the economic situation and efforts to tackle the problems. Also present were MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, secretary-general Datuk Dr Ting Chew Peh and vice-presidents Datuk Chua Jui Meng and Datuk Fong Chan Onn, and national Youth leader Datuk Chan Kong Choy.

(END)