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Mahathir-Abu Hassan/BM (with pix)

NOT WRONG FOR ABU HASSAN TO STAY IN HOTEL

KUALA LUMPUR, April 16 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today it is not an offence for Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Abu Hassan Omar to stay in a hotel while waiting for the completion of renovation works to his official residence.

The prime minister said members of the government administration including ministers and menteri besar were allowed to stay in hotels while waiting for their official residence to be ready or provided with an official residence.

"I myself stayed in a hotel before given a house (official residence). When I was made Education Minister, I stayed in Mirama Hotel (till given an official residence by the government)," he told reporters after calling on visiting Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni at his hotel suite, here.

Yesterday, the Selangor State Legislative Assembly was told that the state government spent RM40,000 to pay for Abu Hassan's hotel bill. Abu Hassan stayed for 125 days at Radisson Hotel in Shah Alam while waiting for the completion of renovation works to his official residence.

Today, a newspaper reported that Abu Hassan's hotel accommodation and expenses amounted to \$75,000 including for his driver, who was given an entitlement equivalent to that of a Division One government officer.

Following the report, the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) is said to have started investigations to see if there was any misuse of government funds and false claims.

Asked to comment on the claims and ACA probe into the matter, Dr Mahathir said: " I don't know about this. So, I dare not say anything."

On the delay by Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers to meet to tackle the water crisis, he said, the urgency was only felt in the Klang Valley.

"The meeting is only to determine the policy. That's on-going but to help each other, there is no problem," he said

Terengganu Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad said yesterday that the meeting might be held next month or in June.

Dr Mahathir said discussions must be held first before the states could cooperate with one another to tackle the water woes.

He said there was a need for a concept on the inter-state sale and purchase of water as the supply of water generate income for the states.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir met for about an hour with Museveni, who arrived here yesterday for a four-day state visit. -- BERNAMA

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