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Ong: Ministry studies all options before taking action under ISA

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The Home Ministry studies all options before taking any action under the Internal Security Act.

Deputy Minister Datuk Ong Ka Ting said today if the police detained anyone under the ISA for 60 days, they must have had good reason.

"However, this is only to facilitate their investigations as the final decision, whether to detain anyone for two years under the ISA, lies with the Home Minister.

"Any recommendations by the police to detain a person under the ISA will be counter-checked by the Ministry.

"Our Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, has made it clear before... the ISA will not be used if there are other means available," Ong added.

He was commenting on recent criticisms by the Bar Council and non-governmental organisations on the detention of four people under the ISA for allegedly spreading rumours via the Internet regarding purported riots by Indonesians in the Chow Kit area.

Of the four, three were detained for 60 days under the ISA to facilitate investigations while the other was remanded under section 117 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Yesterday, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Rahim Noor said that the police had not decided what sort of action would be taken against the four people.

Ong was speaking to reporters after witnessing the signing of a memorandum of understanding between a Chinese daily, Sin Chew Jit Poh, and the International Design Exhibition Centre at the Malaysian International Exhibition and Showroom in Sungai Besi.

The MoU provides for Sin Chew Jit Poh and IDEC to organise exhibitions for Malaysian-made products, the first being the Malaysian Book Fair launched today.

On police preparations for the Commonwealth Games next month, Ong said the police had set up a special task force comprising senior police officers to deal with any report lodged by participants and foreigners during the Games.

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