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Probe into report on Anwar passing out letters from prison

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PENANG, Sun. - The Government views seriously a weekly tabloid report claiming that convicted former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was passing out from prison his letters condemning Government leaders.

The report was published by the vernacular 'Eksklusif' in its May 31-June 6 issue.

Stressing that Anwar was never allowed to do so, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi promised an investigation.

The Government, he said, would want to establish the authenticity of the letter and whether it was actually signed by Anwar.

"As far as I know, Anwar has never been allowed to have his letters leave his cell," he said. "The Prisons Department has confirmed he never did so because it was not allowed."

"I have to check if the letter was really from him or if it was written by a third party, namely those visiting him at his cell," he told reporters after officiating the national level Seni Silat Lincah Malaysia Association (PSSLM) gathering and presentation ceremony at Padang Kota Lama here.

Also present were Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon and PSSLM founder and leader Datuk Omardin Mauju.

Abdullah, who is also Home Minister, was asked on steps taken by the Government to check the alleged leakage of Anwar's letters to the tabloid.

The letter, among other things, claimed Anwar was against corruption, the Hudud laws, cronyism and nepotism practised by First Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin.

The letter also claimed that a senior Minister accepted thousands of ringgit in bribes and that the son of another senior Minister received a bank loan for RM1.8 billion.

It did not disclose the identities of the Ministers or the loan applicant.

Abdullah said stern action would be taken against any parties involved in helping Anwar smuggle out his letters.

He did not specify the kind of action that could be taken against those involved.

Earlier, Abdullah, who described members of Seni Lincah as very disciplined and loyal to their leaders, urged them to help check moral decadence among youngsters. He also asked them to help curb the growing tendency of youths to defy law and order.

"I hope you can help instill a greater sense of love for the country and its leaders who have done a lot for the people through your activities," he said.

Despite the leadership being elected democratically, certain groups still condemned the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad although he initiated great socio-economic development.

At the function, Abdullah also presented certificates and conferred awards to 120 Silat Lincah members.

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