

11 OCT 2000

Abdullah-Video

DECISION TO WITHDRAW VIDEO GAME LICENCES STAYS- ABDULLAH

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 11 (Bernama) -- The Cabinet's decision to withdraw video games licences in the country stays, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

The Cabinet had earlier discussed at length the feedback on its decision made last week, he told reporters after meeting Wanita Umno committee members here.

He said no exemption whatsoever had been given to anyone on this matter.

" After getting a report (on the feedback), the Cabinet discussed the matter again, quite a lengthy discussion this time and the decision taken was to proceed with the earlier decision without any changes. There is no exemption at the moment," said Abdullah, who is also Home Minister.

In announcing the government's decision to ban video game arcades last week, he said licences issued for video game outlets would be withdrawn in two months and no new licences would be approved.

The decision was made after taking into account the danger and the serious social problems caused by video games.

Following the decision, local authorities and the police intensified their enforcement to seize illegal video game machines.

Political parties, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the public supported the government's decision to ban video games.

Meanwhile, Transport Minister and MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said the blanket ban was a bold move.

"It is something that we, MCA has been asking for and I am glad that the people are fully supporting it," he told reporters at his office today.

He earlier witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding to form a joint-committee between the Selangor Road Transport Department (JPJ) and the Selangor Anti Corruption Agency (ACA).

In SHAH ALAM, Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting said state governments should treat Abdullah's announcement last Wednesday on the video game ban as an official instruction.

He said they should step up enforcement against illegal outlets.

The Cabinet at its weekly meeting today endorsed Abdullah's statement after deliberating on the views, suggestions and appeals by individuals, associations and companies, he told reporters after closing the International Conference and Exhibition on Landscape 2000 here today.

He also presented ISO 9002 certificate to Park Games Equipment (M) Sdn Bhd - a world-class producer of playground equipment and teen sports facilities.

The company is the largest producer in Asia and West India with an expected sales turnover of RM10 million this year.

Ong said the Cabinet's decision to endorse Abdullah's the statement was in the best interest of the country and the people especially the younger generation as gambling video games had become a social menace and had to be checked effectively.

He said the two-month grace period was adequate for the operators to cease operations.

Ong also said cybercafes could continue their business as long as the operators did not breach the stipulated conditions.

He said they would be ordered to close shop if they allowed gambling through their computers.

On landscaping, Ong said the government was drawing up a comprehensive

National Landscape Policy to realise its ambition to turn Malaysia into a "Garden Nation" by 2005.

He said the Malaysian government was committed to maintain 50 per cent of the country under greenery.

Towards this end, a total of 100,000 trees would be planted simultaneously in one minute on Sunday throughout the country in conjunction with the World Habitat Day to improve greenery, landscape and environment quality.

He said the millennium tree-planting programme would be launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at Taman Bukit Jalil in Kuala Lumpur.

The event will be televised live by RTM with simultaneous launching by Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers at state level, local authorities and non-governmental organisations.

The programme will be launched to clinch a record to be entered into the Guinness Book of Records and the Malaysia Book of Records.

Previous Guinness Book of Records stand at 24,199 trees planted in a week in Sao Paulo, Brazil on April 10, 1996.

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