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Najib-Loggers

M'SIA WILL CONTACT INDON MILITARY TO HELP RELEASE LOGGERS

KUALA LUMPUR, July 1 (Bernama) -- The armed forces will contact their Indonesian counterpart to help secure the release of four Malaysian loggers detained in West Kalimantan should diplomatic efforts prove futile, said Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

"We hope Indonesia will display the spirit of comradeship and free the loggers soonest possible," he told reporters after appearing on TV3's morning talk show "Malaysia Hari Ini" here today.

Indonesian police detained the loggers in Ulu Sungai Jernang in Sematan in Sarawak's interior for suspected illegal logging and trespassing in Kalimantan.

The loggers, Zaini Karim, Jeranding anak Jabah, Antanai anak Panas and Ahmad Saparani are being held at the commercial crimes headquarters in Pontianak, the provincial capital.

Najib said alleged timber smuggling along the Kalimantan-Sarawak border could be taken up with the various border sub-committees as well as the Malaysia-Indonesia General Border Committee.

"Although the GBC mainly meets once a year, both sides organise an array of activities almost every month, such as exchange of visits," he said.

As such, both sides were constantly in touch to discuss arising problems either through meetings or over the telephone, he said.

Earlier, during the TV talk show, Najib announced July 31 as the screening date for the movie "Lt Adnan," about the heroism of a Malaysian officer in defending Singapore from Japanese army invasion during World War II.

The film, directed by Aziz M Osman and costing RM2.5 million, was jointly produced by the ministry, Grand Brilliance Sdn Bhd and Paradigm Film Sdn Bhd.

In KUALA TERENGGANU, Newly-appointed supreme council Datuk Idris Jusoh described his appointment as injecting new spirit into Terengganu Umno.

The appointment was a recognition to the Terengganu representative and that it boosted the commitment and strength to the State Umno's struggles, he told reporters when commenting on his appointment.

He pledged to raise Terengganu Umno's problems to the party leadership through the supreme council.

Asked on the oil royalty, Idris, who is also Terengganu Umno deputy chief, said the State Umno would wait for the study to be carried out by the federal government on the oil royalty rights to be paid to Terengganu.

He, however, said the PAS-run Terengganu government must be more transparent and responsible by giving priority to the people's development if they received oil royalty from the federal government.

" There must be accountability and priority must be given to the people and not to their politics," he said.

The state government should also strive to create more economic opportunities so that the state would not be backward in terms of development as compared to other states, he added.

In KUALA LUMPUR, Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said the 10 supreme council appointees and the State Umno leadership announced yesterday showed the party leadership's efforts to further consolidate Umno.

He said the appointments were made after taking into account the views of all quarters and the need for everyone to cooperate for the party's interests.

" We want to ensure everyone work hard to consolidate and strengthen Umno, more so after the elections for top party posts are over," he said

when asked to comment on the appointments.

Earlier, he opened a youth forum-cum-workshop organised by The Befrienders in conjunction with its 30th anniversary.

On Umno Youth information chief Azimi Daim's appointment as a supreme council member, Hishammuddin said it was an honour and a bonus to the movement.

"I did not expect another Umno Youth member to be appointed to the council as there are many youth representatives in the council. Azimi is a young and credible leader. His appointment is a bonus to the movement and at the same time, it must be reciprocated with trust and responsibility," he said.

Asked on the appointments of Dr Siti Zaharah, Dr Norraesah and Azalina, he said it was to create a balanced composition owing to lack of Wanita Umno representatives in the council.

In MELAKA, Chief Minister Datuk Wira Mohamed Ali Rustam said he believed the new faces would provide fresh inputs to strengthen Umno and pursue its struggles for the people and country.

"I see the appointments as a good mix particularly the younger ones contributing to Umno's strength," he told reporters after launching the State Umno's "5K" programme (loyalty, love, excellence, confidence and leadership),

He said it was the State Umno's information programme to branches aimed at instilling loyalty to the party among members.

He said the four-year programme till 2004 was to enhance unity and to win over the younger generation who opposed the government in the last general election.

In REMBAU, Negeri Sembilan Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad said he had no problems performing party responsibilities despite not being reappointed to the supreme council.

He said being excluded from the council was not a hindrance or a problem to him to carry out party duties.

"When I first became Menteri Besar, I was neither a supreme council member nor the State Umno liaison chief," he told reporters after attending a women's gathering at Kampung Astana Raja, near here.

Mohamed Isa said he accepted Dr Mahathir's decision not to reappoint him to the council as it was the president's prerogative.

When pointed out that with his exclusion, the Negeri Sembilan Umno only had one representative in Deputy Information Minister Datuk Khalid Yunus in the council, he said, "it does not matter. What's important is to continue consolidating the party." -- BERNAMA

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