

18 DEC 2001

Rais-Gani

DON'T QUESTION GANI'S A-G APPOINTMENT, SAYS DR RAIS

KUALA KLAWANG, Dec 18 (Bernama) -- No one should question Datuk Abdul Gani Patail's appointment as Attorney-General as he was named for the post in accordance with Article 145 of the Federal Constitution.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim said opposition parties devoid of issues are attempting to blow up the matter to solicit sympathy from the people.

He was speaking to reporters at his Hari Raya open house here today.

Gani, 46, will succeed Datuk Seri Ainum Mohd Saaid who has resigned on health reasons. He will take office on Jan 1 next year.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday the incoming Attorney-General should be given a chance to prove himself.

Describing criticism of Gani's qualification as "a matter of opinion," he said it was unfair to question his credibility at this juncture.

His appointment has met with protests from the opposition and human rights groups, and most recently, the Bar Council.

After the announcement, DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang, Aliran and Suaram registered their objections.

Dr Rais also said the government's initiative to introduce various amendments to the law to provide more clout to enforcement efforts augured well for the judiciary's future.

He said the move was aimed at putting in place a more responsible judiciary that would gain greater public confidence.

"In this way, we can establish a judiciary that was more responsive to the needs of the country.

"From the people's perception, the achievements of the Malaysian judiciary are gradually improving but the challenges are not getting lesser," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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