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Police-DTC

POLICE HAVE NOT WRAPPED UP DTC FIRE PROBE, SAYS KL CPO

KUALA LUMPUR, July 12 (Bernama) -- Police have not completed investigations into the cause of the fire that destroyed the Dewan Tunku Canselor in Universiti Malaya last month, incurring RM12 million in estimated damage.

Kuala Lumpur Chief Police Officer Datuk Meor Chek Hussein Mahayuddin said the investigations by a special team was almost 50 per cent complete.

The team still needed time to conduct a thorough probe before preparing a complete report on the incident, he told reporters when commenting on a news report today that a short-circuit had been cited as the probable cause for the blaze.

Preliminary report had concluded that overloading was also another possible cause of the fire.

Officials said the 33-page report submitted to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at yesterday's Cabinet meeting had also stated that initial findings showed that maintenance was another area it had looked into.

In the 3.45am incident on June 29, more than 1,800 graduate gowns and 2,000 mortar boards were destroyed.

The hall, which was opened by first Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman on June 25, 1966, had seen over 80,000 graduates receiving their scrolls.

Meor Chek Hussein said the police had not receive a copy of the preliminary report from any agency although it was reported that the Fire and Rescue Department had submitted its initial report to Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting last week.

"Although the police is the authority in the fire probe, we cannot issue statements merely based on the findings of the Fire and Rescue Department as it involved technical aspects as to how the fire could have started," he said.

He also said no arrests had been made although 33 people, including Universiti Malaya students, staffers, security guards and outsiders loitering at the scene of the fire had been questioned and statements recorded.

"We are still investigating and if the need arises, we will recall those from whom statements have been taken for further investigations," he said.

He urged the media and the public to be patient and wait for the police to complete the investigations and release a full report of the incident.

Acting CID Director Datuk Ramli Yusof is heading the police probe team. Experts from the Electricity Supply and Gas Department and the Chemistry Department are also in the team.

-- BERNAMA

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