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Abdullah-Cell

ABDULLAH UPSET OVER DETAINEES' ESCAPE FROM LOCK-UP

PUTRAJAYA, March 6 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said he felt extremely ashamed and angry upon receiving news in Brisbane, Australia of the escape by two detainees from the Selangor Contingent Police Headquarters Lock-up in Shah Alam, on Monday.

Abdullah, who is also Home Minister, said he had called Deputy Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Jamil Johari for an explanation on what had happened in the incident.

"I had told him (Jamil) that the matter should not have occurred and should not recur...and he had said that all measures, efforts will be taken so that it will not be repeated," he said.

Abdullah disclosed this to reporters after attending the signing of the Pledge of Good Conduct by members of the administration including ministers and deputy ministers in front of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad here.

The Deputy Prime Minister was in Australia to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) when the incident occurred.

Abdullah said the government planned to build more secure lock-ups in every district to overcome the problem of breakouts.

"The proposal is that two lock-ups which are big, orderly, secure, cannot be broken and equipped with monitoring systems and so on would be built in every district.

"And this must be built immediately because the need for them is urgent at the moment," he said.

In the incident at Shah Alam, two men who were detained in connection with investigation into the robbery of passengers of an Airport Coach to the KL International Airport (KLIA) on Feb 22 had escaped through the air-conditioning and wiring conduit.

About 500 police personnel were reported to be involved in a major operation to track the two fugitives.

Following the incident, four policemen comprising a lance corporal and three constables were suspended from duty immediately to assist in investigations.

Abdullah said he had briefed cabinet ministers who met today on the measures taken by Royal Malaysia Police to ensure that such incidents did not recur besides the action taken against the policemen involved.

He said among the reasons which led to the escape were negligence on the part of the policemen on duty besides the weak structure of the lock-up.

He said that among other things that the investigation would look into was how the two detainees could climb up the ceiling and crawl out before escaping without being heard by anyone.

"Detailed and intensive investigation was being carried out to determine if there were other reasons for negligence," he said.

Abdullah said detention centres for drug addicts should also be made more secure.

He said the country had too many drug addicts and such centres had become congested.

"We want hardcore addicts to be transferred immediately to new areas near prisons where the land had been gazetted as a detention area for hardcore addicts," he said.

The escape by the detainees in Shah Alam was the second such incident this month after 11 detainees escaped from the lock-up at the Kota Tinggi Police Station in Johor last Saturday.

Seven of them had been recaptured and police were still tracking the four others.

-- BERNAMA

MAM AHH AO