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Abdullah-Bible

BAN ON IBAN-LANGUAGE BIBLE LIFTED

JOHOR BAHRU, April 25 (Bernama) -- The ban on the Iban-language Bible "Bup Kudus" has been lifted with immediate effect, Acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

"I have decided that the ban be lifted and that the action (lifting of the ban) be gazetted," said Abdullah, who is also the Home Minister.

He said the Iban-language Bible was for use of the Iban community only and it had been in use for a long time.

The Bup Kudus was among 35 books banned by the Home Ministry last week.

Following that, church leaders had appealed to the ministry for a review of its decision, saying the Bible had been in use in Sarawak for 15 years.

Abdullah said the ministry would ban books and magazines disseminating extremist views and teachings on any religion.

"It might create groups practising extremist religious teachings, which might have bad effects on their religion and jeopardise national security and racial harmony," he told reporters after inspecting the Integrated Southern Gateway project here.

Abdullah also said the ministry would now be more careful in vetting foreign magazines before approving them for distribution in the country.

"We (ministry) need to be more careful in the future," he said when asked on the vetting of the April 5 issue of The Economist, which contained an article highly critical of the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Abdullah said the ministry scrutinised all foreign magazines before they were released into the market but sometimes baseless reports "still got through".

He said the ministry had no plans to take The Economist to court over the article.

The ministry merely wanted magazines to carry reports based on facts and not lies and manipulation, he said.

"We do not want reports that do not portray the actual situation, more on fabrication, which we cannot accept," he said.

On the RM1.2 billion Integrated Southern Gateway project, he said the government did not have problems with its financing.

He said if financing for the project to build a new Customs, Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) Complex was a problem the government would not have started on it.

The project in Tanjung Puteri in the heart of the city will replace the existing CIQ complex at the Johor Causeway.

"No. If we have problem we wouldn't have started on this project," he said of the project, which is undertaken by Gerbang Perdana Sdn Bhd and scheduled for completion in October 2005.

"We are not sharing it with anybody. It's ours, 100 percent ours, Malaysian (project) I mean," he said.

He said work was progressing smoothly and he hoped it would be completed on schedule.

The project, which boasts an attractive design, is also aimed at easing severe congestion at the Johor Causeway and giving a new image to the country's southern gateway.

Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman and Second Finance Minister Datuk Dr Jamaluddin Jarjis accompanied Abdullah on the visit.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad performed the ground-breaking ceremony for the project last February.

-- BERNAMA  
MNY MHI YBY