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Abdullah-Corruption

CORRUPTION WILL NOT BE TOLERATED, SAYS ABDULLAH

ALOR GAJAH, June 29 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today that corruption among the people, especially the Malays, cannot be tolerated and should be eradicated.

"We cannot allow it to spread, We must arrest it and eradicate it," the deputy prime minister said after attending his office's open day celebration at the A'Famosa Resort, here.

He was asked to comment on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's advice to the people, especially the Malays, to avoid corruption or risk losing the country to the most persuasive corrupters.

Dr Mahathir said at the Transparency International Malaysia Integrity Award presentation yesterday that corruption should be avoided like poison but unfortunately many Malaysians, including the Malays, viewed it as an easy way to get rich.

Asked about reports on Home Ministry staff being involved in corruption, Abdullah, who is also Home Minister, said: "The ministry has not received any complaint. If there is any through the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) and the police, an investigation will be conducted."

On reports that about 20 housing projects, including the construction of police stations, had been abandoned nationwide, he said the matter would be resolved.

"We will complete the current abandoned projects while those that have not taken off will be tendered out," he said.

On protests against the proposed construction of a columbarium in Penang, he said the state government must resolve the problem and explain the matter to the people.

"We don't want this problem to drag on. Sometimes we have to act firmly and the explanation given must be correct and acceptable," he said.

The Malaysian Buddhist Association (MBA) yesterday asked the developer of the controversial columbarium project in George Town to stop misusing Buddhism for commercial purpose.

MBA secretary Lim Tien Phong said the association, which represents over 700 Buddhist organisations nationwide, was strongly against the developer calling part of the commercial project a Buddhist institution.

Abdullah also clarified that the recruitment of 23,000 policemen to beef up the police force would be done over five years and not two years as reported by the media yesterday.

"We plan to recruit 23,000 personnel. The 4,000 already approved will be recruited over two years and the rest, as required, that is over five years," he said.

On the formation of pro tem committees in the 25 Umno divisions to be created following the redelineation of the electoral boundaries, Abdullah, who is also Umno deputy president, said the matter had not been decided.

-- BERNAMA

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