

05 SEP 2003

Abdullah-Hadi

UP TO THE POLICE TO TAKE ACTION OVER HADI'S STATEMENT, SAYS ABDULLAH

CYBERJAYA, Sept 5 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahamd Badawi said today that Terengganu Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang exceeded his bounds in describing the police as 'syaitan-syaitan bisu' (silent devils).

Abdullah, who is Home Minister, said that he was leaving it to the police to take action.

Hadi recently described the police as 'syaitan-syaitan bisu' following what he perceived as their failure to act against the various offences, alleging that their failure to cooperate with the PAS-led state government in implementing its hudud, qisas and takzir was the cause of the high rate of vice and gambling activities in the state.

"My comment is that it's improper, inappropriate, irresponsible, callous and beyond the limit," he told reporters after meeting 10 members of the MSC-IAP on the second day of its seventh meeting here.

"What was stated by him was so obvious, what else is there to investigate. What he stated has been reported in the newspapers. It's up to the police if they wish to take action," he said when asked whether a police report will be lodged against Hadi, the acting PAS president.

Abdullah said that such a statement should not have been made by a leader and definitely each and every member of the police force would feel slighted by the statement.

"Surely he knows that it is the responsibility of the police to curb crime in Terengganu," he said.

The deputy prime minister said that as earlier stated by the attorney-general, the police cannot be tasked to implement the hudud in Terengganu.

Instead, he said, the police were required by the federal government to enforce the Penal Code and according to records, the Terengganu police ranked second among the various states in resolving criminal cases.

"As such, accusing the police of being responsible for the vice and criminal activities is just going overboard, failing to have any regard for the contributions of the police," he said.

Asked whether Hadi's statement has a seditious element, Abdullah said: "I'm not a lawyer to say this. It's up to the police."

Asked to comment on the campus elections which appeared to have been dominated by pro-government candidates, Abdullah said he did not think so.

"But the elections in the various campuses appeared to have run smoothly as there no reports of clashes. Alhamdulillah," he said.

On the statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that he was leaving it to Abdullah to determine his role in the future development of the MSC, the deputy prime minister said that he was happy over Dr Mahathir's preparedness to continue to play a role in the MSC.

However, the role of Dr Mahathir, who steps down next month, has yet to be determined.

"To be specific, I've yet to discuss with him. Definitely he'll be involved, Inshaallah," said Abdullah, who takes over from Dr Mahathir on his retirement.

Asked what needed to be implemented during the second phase of the MSC development, Abdullah said e-education, e-community and e-government had to be aggressively pursued.

He said that fields related to R&D including those which were

specifically ICT-based should also proceed at the current steady pace.

"This is vital to ensure that the MSC benefits the country and the people," he said.

Abdullah also expressed confidence that the ICT sector would continue to serve as catalyst for the country's economic development.

Relating his meeting with the IAP members today, he said that they had stated their commitment to continue to serve as IAP members.

He said that they were also committed to the expansion of their operations in Malaysia.

The IAP members also expressed their intention to engage more Malaysian workers skilled in IT especially Masters and Ph.D. holders.

"They expect me to continue to place attention and have high commitment when taking over from the prime minister," he said.

Abdullah said that he had indicated to the IAP members that the MSC was a very vital project for the country's future.

-- BERNAMA

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