

Go on leave, deputy minister told
Malaysiakini.com
March 5, 2007

Deputy Internal Security Minister Mohd Johari Baharum, who is being investigated for allegedly freeing criminal suspects after accepting bribes, must go on indefinite leave.

In a statement, Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang said Johari should go on leave until he is completely cleared of the serious charges against him.

"This would avoid all perceptions about the lack of independence, diligence and professionalism of an investigation involving the deputy minister as well as release the Abdullah administration from the taint of corruption," he added.

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who is also the internal security minister, is Johari's immediate boss in the embattled ministry.

Meanwhile, Lim also recounted how inspector-general of police Musa Hassan told a seminar two weeks ago that the police is afflicted by the 'close one eye syndrome'.

He said Musa had lamented that in the war against crime, the police are at times frustrated by some politicians who want the police to keep 'one eye open and one eye closed'.

Lim called on the police chief to come clean on the seriousness of the problem of 'interfering politicians'.

RM5.5 million

The 'freedom for sale' allegation against Johari first surfaced on the Internet - in a page hosted by free website, Freewebs.com. It accused him of being the "most powerful, but corrupted deputy minister."

The anonymous website cited three 'classic cases' in which Johari had allegedly abused his power and breached the trust of his superior, Abdullah.

The deputy minister was accused of freeing three suspects linked to gangsterism and vice activities early this year. One of the suspects is said to be the brother of another deputy minister.

He allegedly received bribes amounting to RM5.5 million.

On Sunday, it was reported that the Anti-Corruption Agency is investigating the matter.

Johari has denied the allegation and blamed the police for not carrying out proper investigations and not following the 'standard operating procedure'.

The latest scandal comes hot on the heels of graft allegations against the country's top corruption fighter - ACA director-general Zulkipli Mat Noor.