

More than 9,000 units to be built \$500 million housing plan for cops

By Sabry Sharif and S. Jayakrishnan

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — The Government today announced a \$500 million crash housing programme to provide 9,369 walk-up and high-rise flats for the police in the next three years.

This is in addition to on-going housing projects involving 3,418 units costing the Government \$221 million.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced this measure to overcome the acute housing shortage facing 47,000 out of the 80,000 strong police force.

Under the Fifth Malaysia Plan, the police were to get 10,000 housing units but up to Dec 31 last year, only 4,064 units costing \$205 million had been built.

The crash housing programme would benefit the lower ranks in Klang Valley, Penang, Alor Star, Malacca, Bukit Fraser, Kangar, Johor Baru and Seremban.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the Home Minister, announced this during his annual meeting with three police associations — Junior Police Officers, Inspectors and the Senior Gazetted Officers Associations — at the Federal police headquarters in Bukit Aman here.

Briefing newsmen later, Home Ministry secretary-general Datuk Wan Sidek Wan Abdul Rahman said that the associations, through their representatives, had raised various problems facing the force with the Prime Minister.

He said that the associations told Dr Mahathir that the housing problem was the most pressing as some police personnel had to top up their housing allowances in some places where rentals were high.

"The Prime Minister decided the best solution is to implement a crash housing pro-

gramme to resolve this problem," he added.

Datuk Wan Sidek said this crash housing programme would benefit 80 per cent of the lower-ranking police personnel based in major urban areas.

Under this programme, the Ministry will buy 7,432 housing units costing \$411,643,000 from the private sector.

"This will be housing units which have already been completed and those under construction," he said.

In the next seven months, 660 housing units will be purchased from the housing developers.

He added that another \$88,357,000 would be spent on building 1,937 housing units on police land.

Datuk Wan Sidek said that Dr Mahathir wanted the Ministry and police to buy the bulk of the flats on plan instead of waiting for them to be built as it would take several years for housing projects to be completed.

A committee chaired by Datuk Wan Sidek and comprising Inspector General of Police, the director-general of the Economic Planning Unit in the Prime Minister's Department, the Finance Ministry secretary-general and deputy secretary-general in the Prime Minister's Department would implement the programme.

Datuk Wan Sidek said that the programme would not include Sabah and Sarawak, the housing needs of which would be covered under the Fifth Malaysia Plan's on-going projects.

He said that the Government had to date provided accommodation for 33,000 personnel.

On the request by the Junior Officers Association to relax entry requirements for constables, he said that this and other problems raised during the meeting would be discussed at a later date.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir was briefed by the Assistant Director of Services and Posts cum Deputy Director of Management Datin Zakiah Laidin, Special Branch director Datuk Zulkifli Abdul Rahman, Criminal Investigations Department director Datuk Mohamed Zaman Khan and Police College commandant Abdul Aziz Haji Harun.