

CPM helping soldiers remove booby traps

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BUKIT KAYU HITAM, Sat. — The Communist Party of Malaya is helping security forces to detect and remove booby traps planted along the border areas in its 41-year-old insurgency, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister advised the public that in the meantime they should stay away from these areas until the Government gave its clearance. This was to prevent mishaps.

He said although some booby traps were being removed, there was still a long way to go before the exercise could be completed.

"Only they (the CPM) know where these were planted."

The areas concerned, like Gubir in Kedah and Grik in Perak, are "old areas" and planted with booby traps by the CPM many years back, he said.

"We cannot afford to wait for the traps to become ineffective as we do not know when will this happen."

He was speaking at a Hari Raya gathering with army personnel here.

Dr Mahathir also said the Government would spend over \$100 million from the \$500 million allocated on housing for police personnel, to purchase ready houses and those under construction.

Houses, priced between \$50,000 and \$80,000, were being purchased for police

personnel in States like Selangor, Penang and Johore from both the State Economic Development Corporations and the private sector.

He said the decision to purchase such completed houses and those under construction was taken due to costs, including land prices, which would escalate further in the near future.

The Government had allocated the \$500 million sum to build houses for police personnel within a two-and-a-half year period.

Escalate

The decision to purchase houses meant prices would be a little bit higher but he maintained that the move was justified.

Dr Mahathir said the move meant that police personnel could occupy them immediately.

Earlier in his speech, the Prime Minister thanked the security forces for maintaining peace and for their readiness to face perils in a guerilla warfare waged by the CPM throughout the 41-year-old CPM insurgency.

He said security forces did not shirk their duties throughout the insurgency though there were many casualties and those injured when caught by booby traps.

"But our men were not frightened and were prepared to face the perils."