

# PM: Use Rela members for development projects

members, he said, should also be on the alert against crime in their neighbourhood.

The Home Ministry had taken steps to implement various new policies and strategies aimed at upgrading Rela's effectiveness as a security force.

The Prime Minister was speaking after inspecting a Rela parade mounted by 567 members, including a 103-men Guard-of-Honour and 14 officers from throughout the country. The parade is in conjunction with Rela Day on Thursday.

Dr Mahathir, however, urged Rela members to continue to be constantly on the alert against threats to national security despite the laying down of arms by members of the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) recently.

He said the laying down of arms by the CPM had great significance to the changing role of Rela.

"Since Independence and up to the CPM laying down arms, we have fought the communists hard wherever they were," he said.

"The resilience and bravery of our security forces, including Rela, had resulted in the communist withdrawal from Peninsular Malaysia, except in a number of areas in Pahang and Perak."

thousands of hectares of abandoned land in the former "black areas" for the benefit of the people.

He said the CPM would continue to be banned.

"CPM members can return to Malaysia but their return will be according to the Constitution and laws of the land.

"This is nothing extraordinary. There have been CPM members like Musa Ahmad who returned to Malaysia."

But he said they would not be given special treatment or given land although the Thai Government was willing to do so.

Dr Mahathir said although the duties of security forces, including Rela, would change with the recent developments, they should be constantly on the alert.

To a question, Dr Mahathir said the strength of the security forces would not be reduced in view of the developments as Malaysia had a "minimal force" considered necessary for a developing nation.

Also present at the parade at the Police Training Centre was Deputy Home Minister Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayob and Home Ministry secretary-general Datuk Wan Sidek Wan Abdul Rahman.

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — State Governments and Government agencies should make use of the 160,000-strong Rela force in development projects, especially those involving rural poverty eradication programmes. Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said by deploying Rela members, the Government would save money which could be channelled to other community projects.

Besides helping in development projects Rela

Despite the withdrawal to these "black areas" the Government had been forced to patrol the jungles and border areas.

This, he said, had not only involved heavy expenses but frequently members of the security forces were injured or killed in ambushes or because of booby traps.

With the CPM laying down arms, Dr Mahathir said the Government was not only able to save lives and prevent the dangers posed to civilians, but also gain control and develop