

18 APR 1996

Rahim-Arms

POLICE TO REVIEW CRITERIA FOR GUN OWNERSHIP

KUALA LUMPUR, April 18 (Bernama) -- Police are reviewing the present criteria and procedures for individuals to own guns, especially side-arms, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Rahim Noor said today.

The need for them to use guns would have to be studied, as the criteria had been in use since the British days, he said.

"In those days we had the Communist insurgency and the secret societies, but the society has changed now," he told reporters during a visit to the Kuala Lumpur General Hospital here in conjunction with the 189th Police Day.

The gun application procedure was already made stringent over the past 10 years, he said, adding that not anyone could easily own a weapon.

The firearms issue has become a hot topic since the conviction of former national skeet shooter Vincent Teo for illegal firearms deals in Sabah, an incident which led Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to order a freeze on all new gun licences.

Rahim said the police would submit a proposal paper on the review of the gun ownership criteria to the Home Ministry for consideration.

Meanwhile, Rahim said the police would inspect all arms dealers' shops and conduct a stock audit of the weapons throughout the country, and in the peninsula, beginning with Selangor, the state nearest to the police headquarters.

"We are facing manpower constraints in this respect, hence we are doing the checking in Selangor first, before going to the other states," he added.

On the probe in Sabah, Rahim said the police were still gathering more information on the gun-running.

He did not discount the possibility of more arrests being made, as the police were only "scratching the surface" for the present, and would go deeper into the case. -- Bernama

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