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Force-Zahidi/BM

ENHANCE OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY, SAYS NEW DEFENCE FORCES CHIEF

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 31 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian Armed Forces need to enhance its operational capability even during the economic downturn, said the new Defence Forces Chief Jen Datuk Seri Mohd Zahidi Haji Zainuddin today.

He said this should be achieved through the optimum utilisation of existing assets.

"Human resources should also be developed, taking into account technological advancement in the military," he said after taking over the command from his predecessor Jen Tan Sri Ismail Haji Omar at the Defence Ministry, here.

Jen Ismail, 57, retires after serving 39 years in the armed forces.

Jen Mohd Zahidi, 50, also wanted due attention be given to aspects of professionalism, expertise, responsibility and loyalty to the armed forces.

He said the Malaysian armed forces should continue to work closely with government agencies and forces in neighbouring and friendly countries to enhance regional resilience.

It should also maintain commitment and capability for peace missions under the United Nations, he said.

Jen Mohd Zahidi thanked the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Defence Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar for having confidence in him to lead the armed forces.

The Kuala Kangsar-born general was first commissioned as an officer in 1969, a 2nd Lt in the Royal Malay Regiment. Since then, he has assumed various posts including aide-de-camp to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and had attended military courses in Australia, Pakistan, the Philippines and United States.

Jen Mohd Zahidi is married to Datin Seri Rasih Md Nor and they have four children.

Later at noon, he handed over the command as Army Chief to his successor Jen. Datuk Md Hashim Hussein, 51, who was Deputy Army Chief since January 1998.

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