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Defence

PM'S MAINTENANCE CULTURE REMARKS A GOOD REMINDER, SAYS SYED HAMID

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 7 (Bernama) -- The military is taking seriously Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's recent reminder on the need to instil a maintenance culture in the Armed Forces, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

"I think we take the prime minister's comment in the positive path, that it reminds everyone including ourselves. To us, his suggestion about maintenance culture is a good reminder to us to create better efficiency," he said.

Being a practitioner of maintenance culture, such reminder was a good warning as the military could not afford to have accidents purely because of lack of maintenance, he said.

Syed Hamid was speaking to reporters after presenting a cheque from the armed forces group insurance scheme to Donnie Gong Wee Hua, widow of air force pilot Capt Jaidev Biaspal who was killed last Sept 10.

Jaidev's Hawk 208 advanced fighter jet crashed during an air-to-ground firing exercise near Gua Musang.

When launching the maiden delivery of a Malaysia-made aircraft to the United States here recently, Dr Mahathir told the Defence Ministry to get the navy to instil a culture that keeps vessels "ship shape" and clean all the time.

Syed Hamid said the reminder was in fact applicable to all Malaysians, including the private sector.

"It is not to the military only. It is applicable to all Malaysians that they should develop a very strong maintenance culture so that whatever we do, it will be very good for the assets as well for the standard of responsibility," he said.

Syed Hamid said the navy and the air force have aircraft and vessels still in service despite them being more 30 years old.

"In our case we got ships that run over 40 years. We are still running with 30 over years helicopters like Nuri (Sikorsky 61-A) and Alouette. We got Wasp and the Caribou still running despite the manufacturers are no longer around," he said.

Such a reminder from the prime minister showed how serious the government looked at maintenance, Syed Hamid said.

"So I think we want to make sure one of the items we definitely want to pay attention during the 8th Malaysian Plan is to ask for good allocation for the purpose of maintenance," the minister added.

-- BERNAMA

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