

10/03/1998

Watch constables available to check crimes in housing estates

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Starting this year, residents who want the Central Monitoring System to be installed at their new housing estates to curb property crimes, will have watch constables at their service.

This follows the implementation of the CMS concept which was recently approved by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also the Home Minister.

Under the system, all new houses will be equipped with a security system linked to the operations room of the CMS, which would be set up in residential areas and manned by at least four or five watch constables.

If a break-in occurs, an alarm in the centre would be triggered off, and a team of watch constables, will check on the affected houses and make arrests, if necessary.

The CMS will be provided by security companies which will also be responsible for the appointment of watch constables and paying them.

Malaysian Crime Prevention Foundation chairman Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today the final aspect of the proposal - the appointment of watch constables - was approved by the Home Ministry recently, paving the way for the system's implementation.

"The Home Ministry has decided that they be given a two-week training at the Police Training Centre where they will be exposed to the various aspects of a policeman's job."

Najib added the Ministry had also agreed that the constables be given powers of arrest, similar to those bestowed on policemen.

"The constables, apart from monitoring CMS, will also have the powers to arrest suspects within the housing estates, in the event of a crime.

"They will be given full support by the nearest police station to enable them to carry out their jobs effectively," he said after attending the MCPF's exco meeting at the Federal police headquarters.

Although, at present, only new housing estates would be equipped with the CMS, there are plans to extend the facility to existing housing estates in the near future.

Early this year, the police had said the system would not be made compulsory although residents are encouraged to subscribe to it.

Najib, who is also Education Minister, said the MCPF had decided to make the setting up of the CMS as its main project for the year, following the increase in property crime over the last two years.

He said that according to police statistics, about 29,360 cases of house break-ins were reported last year - an increase from 22,828, the previous year.

"The MCPF is confident that the setting up of the CMS will help curb property crimes, especially break-ins."

"We hope that all housing developers, including the Housing Developers Association, will extend their assistance and support to the foundation to ensure that the CMS is a success," Najib added.

He said the MCPF exco meeting had also decided to carry out the "safe city" concept this year, involving a partnership among the police, developers, architects and residents.

(END)