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Court-Inquest/BM

INQUEST TOLD POLICE OFFICER FIRED NINE SHOTS

TUMPAT, Feb 29 (Bernama) -- An inquest into the shooting death of six people was told a police officer fired nine shots at a van with six people on board in Kampung Neting, along the Kota Baharu-Pengkalan Kubor road, on Oct 3, 1998.

Kelantan Serious Crimes Division (D9) assistant head Insp Noor Suran Abdul Wahid said he fired the shots on hearing an order to do so from his superior ASP Mohamed Najib Zainol.

The order was given when shots were heard coming from the van.

"I fired nine shots, but I do not know if they hit the targets," he told the inquest here today into the shooting death of the six who were suspected of being involved in firearms smuggling.

The inquest followed a memorandum sent last year by Criminal Law Committee chairman Mohamed Apandi Ali, on behalf of the Bar Council, to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who was also the Home Minister then.

The inquest was held before Magistrate Ahmad Bazli Bahrudin, as coroner, with Mohamed Apandi holding a watching brief for the Bar Council and lawyer G Naidu holding a watching brief for families of the dead.

Noor Suran, the second deponent in the inquest, said the exchange of shots incident at 11.45pm lasted some 20 seconds.

Noor Suran said he and four other police personnel fired from a car which stopped about 10m from the right side of the van while Mohamed Najib and four other police personnel were in a four-wheel drive vehicle which stopped between 15m and 20m in front of the van.

He said police fired in self defence after shots were heard coming from the van.

After the shooting incident, Noor Suran said he and Mohamed Najib approached the van and found six men dead in it and recovered two home-made firearms, a .38 revolver and an Auto Unique firearm.

He said several live bullets and a holster were also recovered from the van.

Ahmad Bazli set April 19 and 20 for further hearing of the inquest.

-- BERNAMA

BD THG