

17/05/2001

Meeting over retirement age

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The Armed Forces Council is scheduled to meet next week to discuss the implications of the revised retirement age in the Government service.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said several aspects had to be looked into since the retirement age for Armed Forces staff was based on their rank.

"For instance, the retirement age for personnel with the rank of Leftenan Kolonel is 52 years whereby a Mejar and those ranking below that retire at 50," he added.

He was speaking to reporters after launching the three-day Asia-Pacific Defence Electronics (APDE) Exhibition and Conference yesterday.

The new retirement age of 56 for civil servants is expected to be implemented from Oct 1 if relevant laws are passed by Parliament.

In March, it was announced that the Government had agreed in principle to raise the retirement age to 56.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said that the retirement age for civil servants may eventually be raised to 60.

Najib said the council would also study measures to be taken to attract more people to sign up with the Armed Forces and the revised retirement age could be an attraction on its own.

Earlier, he was also asked to comment on the procurement of submarines.

He said efforts were being made to prepare the country for it including generating more skilled personnel to handle submarines and building facilities like the RMN submarine base in Sabah.

"We will also stress safety aspects in handling the submarines," he added.

On the new era of warfare, Najib said the tools and tactics of how mankind fought had evolved with military technologies over the past 200 years.

These changes, he added, had been dominated by the co-evolution of economics, information technology, business processes and organisations.

"Through APDE, this exhibition and conference will give us the opportunity to explore the high-technology aspects available in the electronics defence industry," he said.

Electronics in defence, he added, especially network centric warfare, was recognised as one of the fastest growing and important developments in modern warfare.

"The developments of technology in these areas help us make more informed decisions and improve response time," he said.

There are about 20 exhibitors participating in the APDE exhibition and conference including Avitronics (PTY) LTD, Digital Aura (M) Sdn Bhd, Giat Industries and Leapfrog Technologies Sdn Bhd.

Besides the exhibition, the organiser HW Lima Sdn Bhd also held a two-day conference which started yesterday.

Among speakers are military experts including Malaysian Armed Forces Headquarters Communications and Electronics Department director Kolonel Mohd Yusof Sharun and electronics industry experts like Systems Consultancy Services Sdn Bhd executive chairman Khalilur Rahman Ebrahim.

Attendance at the exhibition and conference is limited to those engaged in the electronics defence industry, the Armed Forces, Government agencies

and related trade organisations.