

24/07/2001

Yes to extending retirement age of senior military officers

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The Defence Ministry is in favour of extending the retirement age of senior officers in the armed forces by a year, in line with the recommendation for civil servants.

Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today the Armed Forces Council, which sat last month, had in principle endorsed the move as it would benefit the service considering the expertise possessed by the senior officers.

"Besides that, the move will also attract more people to enlist with the armed forces."

The council had considered the implications of the revised retirement age in the armed forces in view of it being based on the officer's rank.

The retirement age for officers with the rank of lieutenant-colonel is 52 years, and for major and those below, 50.

"We now have to put forward the recommendations to the Cabinet for approval. Once we obtain that, the extended retirement age can be incorporated within the Armed Forces Act straight away," Najib told newsmen after presenting the Territorial Army's honorary colonel ranks to five senior executives of the corporate and civil service at Wisma Pertahanan in Jalan Padang Tembak.

The new retirement age of 56 for civil servants is expected to be implemented from Oct 1. In March, the Government agreed to raise the retirement age to 56.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has said that the retirement age for civil servants may eventually be raised to 60.

On another development, Najib said the ministry would discuss with the Finance Ministry on assisting the country's aircraft repair and overhaul depot, Airod Sdn Bhd, to obtain fresh funds to effectively carry out maintenance works.

Apart from providing maintenance services to the armed forces' aircraft, Airod also has contracts to handle aircraft from other countries.

"Airod is in the midst of clearing its stock of spare parts previously needed for old-generation aircraft like the A-4 Skyhawk (which have been since been decommissioned from the Royal Malaysian Air Force)."

Meanwhile, one of the recipients of the honorary colonel's rank, DRB-Hicom Group executive chairman Tan Sri Saleh Che Sulong, said 122 of the company staff were serving in Pekan with the Territorial Army's 502nd Regiment.

Saleh was commissioned as the DRB-Hicom Group Territorial Army commander effective Feb 1.

The other four who were commissioned were Malacca State Secretary Datuk Abdul Aziz Mohamad Yusof (who commands the Malacca Territorial Army), Tenaga Nasional Berhad president and chief executive Datuk Fuad Jaafar (who commands the Royal Engineers 70th Regiment effective), Universiti Sains Malaysia vice-chancellor Professor Datuk Dzulrifli Abdul Razak (who commands USM's Reserve Officers Training Unit) and International Islamic University rector Professor Dr Mohamad Kamal Hassan (who commands IIU's Territorial Army).

(END)