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Norian-Retire

I'VE DONE MY BEST, SAYS NORIAN

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 4 (Bernama) -- Tan Sri Norian Mai, who retires as the Inspector-General of Police today, says he has discharged his duties to the best of his ability and is satisfied with the police contributions to the country's peace and prosperity.

After holding the top post in the police force for almost five years, Norian said he felt a lot of improvements need to be done by the Royal Malaysia Police to tackle various problems and challenges in tandem with the nation's rapid development.

"To me, I'm satisfied because I've tried my best to honour the trust and responsibility entrusted upon me as the Inspector-General of Police beginning 1999.

"So, when I'm leaving the force now, the people are seeing a peaceful country. I believe the people can see the Royal Malaysia Police's contributions to the country's progress.

"Hence, I feel satisfied to have carried out the responsibilities to the best of my ability," he told reporters at his office here yesterday.

Norian, who will celebrate his 57th birthday tomorrow, joined the police force in 1969. His tenure as the Inspector-General of Police was extended by the government for two years after attaining the mandatory retirement age in 2001.

"It's not that I think (police achievement levels) cannot be improved anymore. I'm satisfied after working to the best of my ability.

"Of course, there are still a lot more that needed improvement in the force," he said.

Norian took over as Inspector-General of Police from Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor at the height of the infamous "black eye" incident.

Rahim was sentenced to two months' jail and fined RM2,000 by the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court after he pleaded guilty to causing hurt to former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim at the federal police headquarters lock-up in Bukit Aman here at 10.45pm on Sept 20, 1998.

Anwar was arrested on the same day for his involvement in a anti-government demonstration and was taken to Bukit Aman and was placed in a cell.

Norian was asked whether the tainted police image following the "black eye" incident had been restored.

"It's difficult for me to comment. To me, it's more to how the society, the layman and the government assess it. It's difficult for me to evaluate," he said.

Nevertheless, feedback from the public and individuals showed police have succeeded in restoring their image, he said.

Norian said in his farewell call on Dr Mahathir before he retired as Prime Minister, he could also sense a similar impression.

In an ideal situation, a country need not always increase the size of the police force in tandem with population growth and development as being done in Malaysia, he said.

"In several developed countries, what is done is that they improve the personal efficiency of a policeman besides using modern equipment.

"A policeman is also given various duties," he said, referring to the police force recruiting more than 20,000 personnel.

"But, in Malaysia, we're unable to do it yet," he said.

Asked what were the main challenges he faced during his stint as IGP,

Norian said rooting out Al-Ma'unah militant group in 2000 and maintaining order during clashes between some residents of Kampung Medan, near here, in 2001, adding that he was initially worried that such incidents might undermine national security.

He said apart from the incidents, the police also had to deal with the public outcry over high crime rates, especially in urban areas, with the police being blamed for "not doing enough to tackle the problem."

The police had a difficult task in convincing the public since they failed to understand how the police had also to deploy and optimise its resources in duties other than crime prevention alone, he said.

He explained that police personnel had to be deployed at other areas like logistics department, administration, the Special Branch, marine and other enforcement duties.

On another note, Norian said he never condoned any malpractices or indiscipline whether it involved high-ranking officers or low rank personnel.

He said each year, hundreds of policemen were either being sacked or charged in court for misconduct, more than at any other government enforcement agencies.

He expressed concern about some young policemen indulging in corrupt practices as they could not resist the trends towards the society being more materialistic.

To tackle this problem, various courses and seminars were held at all levels to equip police personnel with better knowledge as well as religious counselling to help them stay away from unhealthy activities.

Answering a question, Norian said the media's penchant for reporting of crime in the country did not adversely affect foreign investments but instead feedback from foreign investors showed that a key factor of Malaysia's attraction as an investment centre was its peace and stability.

On another issue, Norian said disciplinary action was taken against several police officers for their failure to follow established procedures in detaining 186 Information Technology (IT) workers from India at Brickfields here in March.

India protested over the incident, prompting then Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to order the Foreign Ministry to send a note of apology.

It was reported that the incident led the Indian Government to review several infrastructure projects being awarded to Malaysian firms.

"Most countries understand our action such as when their nationals are involved in fights," said Norian, who was asked about certain police action that could strain bilateral relations between Malaysia and the home countries of immigrants.

Asked about his post-retirement plans, Norian said: "Nothing interesting but from now, I will have more time for my golf."

-- BERNAMA

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