

Mobile phones banned in government offices
Malaysiakini.com
April 16, 2007

The government has banned mobile phones and handheld computers in high-security areas of government offices to prevent spying, a report said today.

Chief Security Officer Johari Jamaluddin said no breaches had yet been detected but the prevalence of electronic devices raised fears of information leaks, the Star daily said.

"We had never felt the need to come up with such a ban before because the use of camera handphones and other electronic devices was not rampant," Johari was quoted as saying.

"Now, everyone seems to have them," he said. "It is a bit inconvenient but for the sake of the country's security, everyone has to play their role."

The government has also introduced electronic jamming devices in "information security zones" where official matters are discussed, the daily said.

Chief secretary's warning

It said the ban was introduced after a warning from the government's chief secretary, Mohamed Sidek Hassan, to government departments, agencies, state secretaries and local councils.

Sidek said in a recent circular that phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) could be used for spying and threatened "the country's economy, national security functions and the image of the government."

"As everybody knows, these handphones and communication devices have become necessary items for people working in all government agencies," he was quoted as saying in the circular.

"The widespread use of these devices, especially handphones with camera facilities, has serious implications on security," he said.

"These devices can be abused to gather or even transmit information in any form, including unauthorised data or digital