

Perception on crime now 'all important' for Hisham

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By Nigel Aw

Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein today pledged to address public perception on crime, saying that this is "all important".

"For me, what is most important is not so much the (crime) index. The perception and the feeling of the public is all important.

"We have achieved a lot but if it has not achieved the expected reduction in the feeling of fear by the public, then more needs to be done and we will do it," he said told reporters today.

Hishammuddin had earlier dismissed claims that crime was on the rise, arguing that the police crime index had shown a downtrend.

Instead, he had then blamed public perception for fuelling escalating fear of crime.

The crime index is the technical term for the number of police reports lodged over several categories of crime. The index has been criticised for not producing useful data.

Speaking to reporters after his walkabout at the upmarket Pavillion shopping mall in Kuala Lumpur, Hishammuddin said the government was "not in denial" on public fear of crime.

Senior cop for current issues in NKRA on crime

"We approach it by having focal point and leadership at the Home Ministry and the police force and we widen the stakeholders to mall owners and schools, involving community policing, intelligence policing and omnipresence.

"All that will have to be taken into account when addressing the fears of the people, which I do hear, and I am not in denial. This is something that has to be addressed, which is why I am here today," he said.

Hishammuddin also said the Home Ministry and police have decided to appoint a senior police officer to lead the National Key Results Area (NKRA) on crime on current issues.

The officer, he said, would be able to coordinate the policies of the government on crime and the police deployment on the ground.

"It's to provide a point person, be it at Bukit Aman or the Home Ministry, in terms of policy as a whole and also in micro terms.

"For example, the focus before was on snatch theft but today there are cases concerning break-ins, and this requires a direction," he said.

The name of the senior officer is expected to be announced tomorrow.

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