

Police boost presence near colleges, varsities

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KUALA LUMPUR: The first wave to make Malaysia safer has begun.

Police are increasing patrols around colleges and institutions of higher learning located in crime-prone areas.

Slate police contingents have also been asked to identify "hot spots" where criminal elements are known to be active and to increase patrols there.

In addition, the Rakan Cop programme — which has now gone nationwide — will be intensified to ensure more effective co-operation between the police and residents in clamping down on criminals.

It is also very likely that closed-circuit television cameras (CCTV) would be installed in selected areas to catch culprits in the act.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said there was no problem in extending the use of CCTV systems nationwide if they proved effective and the cost was reasonable.

The CCTV system is being used in the federal capital to help solve criminal cases.

Abdullah said this after launching the Community Sports League at Padang Semarak in Angkasapuri here yesterday.

"We don't have enough policemen to patrol the streets. Therefore, we have to take advantage of the electronic equipment in this era of electronics and multimedia," he added.

Last week, the Cabinet directed the police to improve security measures in certain areas in the wake of an increase in crime, particularly in the suburbs of Kuala Lumpur.

The directive came in the wake of several murders, rapes, rob-



Abdullah taking a shot at goal after launching the Community Sports League in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

beries and snatch thefts that had grabbed national attention.

Many Malaysians had also voiced concern over the increase in snatch thefts and robberies.

Federal CID deputy director II (Administration) Datuk Syed Ismail Syed Azizan said yesterday police were adopting an integral approach in tackling crime.

He said patrols around higher "educational institutions in crime-prone areas would be increased;

Slate police contingents, he added, had been advised to identify institutions that required extra police supervision.

Once this is done, a district-level task force would be set up to patrol the areas outside these universities and colleges.

Apart from uniformed personnel patrolling cars and motorcycles, plainclothes policemen will also keep an eye on these ar-

eas.

Sentul is the first police district in the country to see the setting up of such a task force.

About 50 police personnel have started patrolling the area around Tunku Abdul Rahman College, Wangsa Maju, where TAK College student Leo Kean Yip, 18, was murdered during a robbery on July 29.

An average of five to six snatch theft and robbery cases occur every week in Wangsa Maju.

Syed Ismail said the initial attention was on college and university locations because many snatch theft and robbery victims have been students.

Most of these institutions are located in the suburbs which are the favourite playground of snatch thieves.

"State contingents will identify the areas that require an in-

creased police presence. Patrols will be carried out by district-level police while the Federal serious crimes division will monitor these patrols," he told *The New Straits Times* yesterday.

Syed Ismail said police would work with security personnel at these institutions to help ensure the safety of students.

However, campus security will still be the responsibility of security personnel employed by the institutions.

Syed Ismail said security staff at such institutions should be alert and students should be more careful so that they do not fall prey to criminals.

He urged the public to make use of the Rakan Cop hotlines and share information with the police, adding that police hoped to work more closely with the public to make the country safer.