

Johari blows top over crime data

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PUTRAJAYA: Police have been accused of manipulating the crime rate figures to confuse the public.

The strong accusation against the 200-year-old police force came from the Deputy Internal Security Minister Datuk Johari Baharum who took police to task over the conflicting crime rate figures.

He was particularly upset that police had denied the figures he had earlier given on the crime statistics for the first three months in Sentul.

On Sunday, Johari had said the crime index in that district for the first quarter had soared by 90 per cent, with snatch thefts going up by 693.5 per cent.

Federal CID director Datuk Christopher Wan Soo Kee, was quoted in several newspapers (not the NST) yesterday claiming snatch thefts in Sentul had dropped by 36.6 per cent.

The CID chief was also quoted as saying the crime index for the first quarter in Sentul had only increased by 10.1 per cent.

Johari was not amused.

He has summoned Wan to his office today to explain the conflicting crime rates.

"I hope he will be pro-active. I want to know exactly why he made such a statement. We should not manipulate figures and give incorrect reports," Johari fumed.

"I am really embarrassed

and disappointed with this whole thing. They should be working towards reducing crimes, not questioning my figures."

Johari also said that he feared that the Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi) may have also been given the wrong figures.

"Information on crime must be correct although it shows our weaknesses. We must be prepared to accept it and rectify the problem."

Johari called for a press conference at his office yesterday and claimed he did not make up the figures nor were they obtained through hearsay or from websites and blogs.

"I don't use computers to make up the numbers. I got the figures from the Kuala Lumpur police contingent. Why are they (Bukit Aman) questioning my figures?"

"As a deputy minister, I cannot be giving something that is not true to the people.

"I hope police will accept their weaknesses and rectify whatever shortcomings they have. We cannot sweep our weaknesses under the carpet and confuse the people with inaccurate reports."

Johari handed out the crime statistics for Dang Wangi, Brickfields, Cheras, Sentul, Putrajaya and KL.

He said he went to the Sentul district police station on Tuesday to find ways to reduce crime, not to find fault with the police or to condemn them.

"I have to be pro-active and carry out my responsibilities as a deputy minister. You can't expect me to be sleeping in the house when the crime rate is soaring like nobody's business?"

Johari said he had ordered the deployment of General Operation Force and Federal Reserve Unit personnel in certain areas to help the police to combat crime in KL.

"I will go down to all the police districts which reported high crime rates."

Johari also said police should appoint experienced OCPDs with good track record.

"We want real crime busters for places like Brickfields, Sentul or Petaling Jaya. Currently, all the OCPDs in KL are new faces and the post of the KL police chief is still vacant after four months," he said.

"These are the things they should look into."

"We have to sit down and discuss the high crime rates. I believe there is something wrong somewhere.

"I have nothing against the police. I am always fighting for their welfare.

"I have no conflict nor personal grudges against them as they are my friends."

Johari pointed out that his outburst has nothing to do with the investigation carried out by the Anti-Corruption Agency against him.

He is being investigated over the release of three ISA detainees from the Simpang Renggam detention centre.