

Let's do a fast job on 'clumsiest ever' probe

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Mohd Johari: Is graft a factor hampering investigations?

KUALA LUMPUR: Submit the report on the "clumsiest ever" murder investigation as soon as possible - that is the order given by Deputy Internal Security Minister Datuk Mohd Johari Baharum to Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Musa Hassan.

"It is pathetic. This is not the first high-profile murder case to be thrown out of court," Mohd Johari noted.

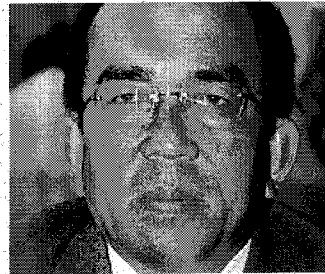
He said he would meet Musa and other Bukit Aman senior directors on Wednesday to identify weaknesses in the handling of high-profile murder cases.

"I want to know if elements like corruption are hampering investigations," he added.

"Investigating officers who do a shoddy job being fired from the force," Mohd Johari told reporters after opening a seminar for directors and senior management in the security industry here.

»Investigating officers who do a shoddy job risk being fired from the force«

DATUK MOHD JOHARI BAHARUM



On Wednesday, Ipoh High Court judge Justice V.T. Singham acquitted six men accused of murdering 21-year-old student Mohd Hosni Fadzli Mohd Amin in December 2003, describing the police investigations as questionable and "the clumsiest ever".

The judge said he was left with no choice but to discharge all the accused who included Azman Ismail, the son of a former Ipoh

mayor.

Yesterday, the Attorney-General's Chambers filed notice of appeal against the acquittal, Bernama reported.

Following a public outcry over the acquittal, the IGP ordered a probe to find out if the weaknesses were "deliberate, to make the case appear weak in court".

Musa said disciplinary action would be taken against the police

officers if it was found that weaknesses on their part had caused the case to be thrown out of court.

Yesterday, Musa said he did not think the case affected the image of the police force as "that's only the comment of the judge and I have to see if it's true".

Meanwhile, lawyer Datuk Muhammad Shafee Abdullah said shoddy police investigations were not a ground for retrial.

He added that the question of having a retrial when new evidence was found did not arise as it was prohibited under Article 7(2) of the Federal Constitution.

He said there must be findings of the trial judge being wrong for a retrial to occur.

Criminal and human rights lawyer Amer Hamzah Arshad said that based on the reason given by the judge, it appears that the prosecution would have an uphill task in asking for a retrial.