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# Rising crime index has Abdullah worried

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The crime index has gone up worryingly and a multi-pronged strategy is being applied to bring it down, the prime minister said.

"I am worried and anyone looking at it will be worried. Seriously, I am very concerned about the percentage of crime in Malaysia," Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

"We have to act on this quickly. We have to make sure the people know about the situation," he said after a three-hour briefing at Bukit Aman.

The number of serious crimes increased by 13.36 per cent nationwide last year, with gang robbery without the use of firearms rising by more than 159 per cent.

"The crime index is getting higher and it can create anxiety among the public.

"When there is fear, the public will be apprehensive about going out at night to the hospital or even the sundry shop."

Abdullah said to help arrest and bring down the crime figures, the police had come up with a strategy, including:

- hiring of contract police personnel who are retiring or have retired;
- installing more closed-circuit television cameras in buildings



Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi says it is important to reduce anxiety among the public

and public places;

- setting up more police stations in shophouses and housing estates;

- appointing civilians to administrative positions and thereby releasing police personnel for their main duties;

- fast-tracking recruitment.

Abdullah said the measures the government was taking would

bring down the crime rate.

"It is important to take this drastic action and reduce anxiety among the public."

Abdullah said the spike in crime statistics was partly attributed to the inclusion of five new categories to the crime index since 2006.

They are: criminal intimidation, outraging modesty, causing hurt, extortion and rioting (fights in-

volving more than five people or damaging public property; not street demonstrations.)

Abdullah said the government has been addressing the upward trend in crime and had in the last budget set aside funds for the recruitment of 60,000 police personnel by 2010.

"It is not an easy task. Anyone wanting to be a policeman must be trained and this takes time. Moreover, we don't have that many police training centres," he said.

The prime minister said the government was setting up two new police training centres in Langkawi, Kedah, and Bentong, Pahang.

He said funding for the measures would not be a problem as there were allocations for the police which had yet to be utilised.

"These funds are for infrastructure development and we can use them for this purpose first and later provide additional funds for the infrastructure."

He said the government had been doing its best to retain the best police personnel.

"We want to attract the best and retain the best," he said, while procedures were in place to ensure speedy promotions without depending on interviews and reports. He said performance and examinations were being used to provide speedy promotions for personnel.