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Street Crime Down by 7.6 Percent

KUALA LUMPUR: The Government Transformation Programme (GTP), which embodies the principles of IMalaysia, of People First, Performance Now, and launched in July 2009 by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, has registered an early sterling performance in one of its National Key Result Areas (NKRAs).

This particular NKRA, in a recent survey, has registered a 13 per cent drop in street crime reported for January 2010 compared with December 2009.

The reported street crime category, which includes criminal offences that take place in public places such as snatch thefts, robbery without firearms, and gang robbery without firearms, showed a 7.6 per cent reduction in the fourth quarter of 2009 compared with the second quarter of 2009.

Meanwhile, the reported index crimes — a term for violent crimes such as murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and property crimes such as burglary, larceny and motor vehicle theft registered a 3.7 decrease in the fourth quarter (December) of 2009 compared with the second quarter (July) of 2009.

"Reducing crime is a vital part of the government's plan to become a fully developed nation by 2020," said Minister of Home Affairs Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein, who is also the lead minister of the crime reduction NKRA.

"Crime and the fear of crime have a direct impact on the rakyat's quality of life. Crime, which affects all strata of society, irrespective of age, education level, gender, race, religion or wealth, also has a substantial economic cost to the country.

"We are, therefore, very pleased indeed with these early results," Hishammuddin said.

"They go to show that the GTP is already in full swing

and bringing about the results we have set out to achieve. But more importantly, we want the people to know that the government is serious about transforming the country into a better place for everyone. We will continuously monitor our activities to ensure that we do not let up on the momentum we have garnered thus far."



Hishammuddin reiterating the seriousness of the government in reducing crime at the recent GTP Roadmap launch.

Hishammuddin said the government's target is to achieve a 5 per cent reduction in overall reported index crime every year for the next three years. But as street crimes are the main focus, the government is aiming for an even higher target - a 20 per cent reduction of street crimes by December 2010.

Some of the priority initiatives that will contribute towards reducing the overall index crime, as outlined in the GTP Roadmap include: employing stakeouts against motorcycle theft, car theft and house break-ins; improving security features for motorcycles, cars and houses including promoting special locks for motorcycles and coding vehicle parts; rewarding owners who invest in improved security features by encouraging insurers to adjust insurance premiums according to security features installed; and increasing availability and usage of mobile access devices, enabling police officers on patrol to check a

vehicle's ownership status via a link to the JPJ's (Road Transportation Department's) vehicle registry.

To reduce street crime, some of the initiatives implemented include ensuring the police force is omnipresent in over 50 hotspots in four states (Kuala Lumpur, Johor, Selangor and Penang which traditionally account for 70 per cent of street crimes) and strengthening their presence with the assistance of over 3,000 trained volunteers (including from JPAM or the Malaysian Civil Defence Department) and RELA (Ikatan Relawan Rakyat Malaysia) by June 2010; placing 500 closed-circuit television cameras (CCTVs) in hotspots to deter criminal activities, enable rapid response by the police and make it easier to identify offenders; setting up special courts as well as night courts for quicker prosecution of street crimes; and establishing the Safe Cities Programme (SCP) to bring together relevant agencies to tackle local problems with localised initiatives.

These localised initiatives will include using bollards to separate pedestrians from motorists and improving in-prison rehabilitation programmes and introducing post-release resettlement programmes to reduce repeat offenders.

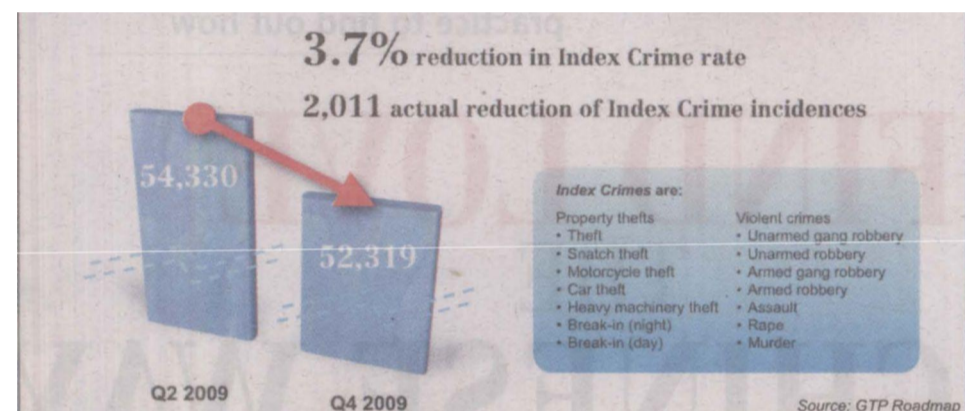
The rehabilitation process will also include a more focused approach, for instance, separating first-time offenders in prisons from hardcore or repeat convicts.

"Crime and the public's fear of crime are a major concern for the government, more so if they involve a marked and sudden increase of violent and property crime," Hishammuddin said.

Despite the efforts by the police, media reports show that the public continues to see crime as one of the most pressing problems in Malaysia today.

Among the reasons cited

Reported Index Crime in Malaysia



are unemployment, migration of youth from rural to urban areas, the influx of illegal immigrants, shortage of police personnel and vehicles to combat crime, and failure in rehabilitating drug addicts.

To overcome this, Hishammuddin said the improved performance by the criminal justice system is critical in order to build and restore public confidence as well as strengthen professional pride across the system.

"To ensure timely prosecution and sentencing of violent crime offenders, we will clear over 6,000 violent crime cases from the backlog," he said adding that the target is to bring an additional 1,000 violent crime offenders to trial in 2010.

The government will also strive to improve the public's perception of safety and reduce the fear of becoming a victim of crime through a three-prong strategy of increasing the people's sense of safety, encouraging

ing volunteers and regularly communicating with the people on crime prevention and reduction.

And to increase the rakyat's sense of safety, some of the initiatives put in place include assigning senior police officers (ranked inspectors and above) to patrol together with policemen on the beat for three to five hours a week.

"Their presence will help to reassure the people and motivate beat policemen. Having police officers stop and speak to the general public for 10 to 15 minutes of every hour during regular patrols will provide opportunities for the public to raise their concerns and get to know their local policemen better. It will also give our police force a better insight of the areas they are patrolling," Hishammuddin said.

The government will also be promoting volunteerism through initiatives that would include expanding

Skim Rondaan Sukarela (SRS), where local residents patrol their own neighbourhoods and expanding Rakan Cop, an existing scheme where people register by a text message (SMS) to act as the eyes and ears of the police. They can then inform the police of criminal incidents or suspicious behaviour via SMS. "We will also intensify the crime prevention and law enforcement information campaign to create a higher level of public awareness, encourage people to engage with the police directly, and reduce their susceptibility to criminal acts.

Hishammuddin said an independent survey will be commissioned to gauge current levels of public satisfaction with the service provided by the police force. Once a baseline is established, a target to raise public satisfaction for every year until 2012 will be set.