

**No Plans To Build New Military Camps - Zahid
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LANGKAWI, Dec 8 (Bernama) -- The government will only build new military camps if there is a strategic need for them and not because of the Malaysian Armed Forces expansion programme, said Defence Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

He said at the moment, no new military camps would be built but the Defence Ministry had asked for a RM500 allocation to repair the homes of soldiers at over 100 military camps identified.

"There are no plans to build new camps as the government feels that the existing camps are sufficient. But in future if there is a need for additional camps for strategic reason, the government may think of building new ones."

Ahmad Zahid said this after officially opening the new staff quarters of the Royal Malaysian Navy at the RMN's Region 3 base in Bukit Malut, here, Thursday.

He said the building of military camps in strategic locations had nothing to do with increasing the number of personnel as the government wanted to save costs.

Instead, he said, the government wanted to increase the number of army reserves such as one Territorial Army member for every full-time soldier by 2025.

Ahmad Zahid also said that the Defence Ministry built 122 housing units worth RM67.36 million at the RMN base in Langkawi to provide comfortable living for the families of the navy personnel.

He said construction of the apartments on the 13.3ha site began in August 2007 and was completed in August this year under the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

The housing complex also has a surau for a congregation of 350 to 400 people, a multi-purpose hall, a Bakat (Malaysian Armed Forces Welfare Body) house and three shoplots.

Ahmad Zahid said the government always considered members of the armed forces as a vital asset, hence providing them with comfortable homes so that they could carry out their duties and responsibilities well.

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