

Najib: Police reforms vital to gain people's trust
New Straits Times
February 14, 2012
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Government will consign archaic laws to the history books

KUALA LUMPUR: PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak urged the police to "relentlessly pursue" reforms to gain the trust of the people and achieve results.

He said the police must rise to the challenge of operating in a more educated and enlightened society that demanded greater accountability.

"The need for political transformation is why (the government) has begun doing away with outdated laws, which some have characterised as anachronistic or draconian, and replaced them with a new set of laws that are more attuned to the needs of a modern democracy," he said yesterday.

He said laws, such as the Internal Security Act, would be "consigned to the history books" and replaced with more challenging laws.

"We cannot be in the business of just arresting anyone.

"(In combating crime), we must ask ourselves whether there is sufficient evidence, and whether it can stand up in court. We must work harder to ensure a higher level of professionalism, as the collection of evidence must not be compromised.

"These are the standards that a modern police force have to live up to."

Najib said substantial reforms did not have to involve a significant increase in funding, adding that improvements in the police had been achieved without any additional manpower.

"Much of this groundbreaking work has been driven by innovative thinking and the constant search for new, creative and practical solutions."

Overall crime rates, he said, had fallen by 10 per cent, while street crime had fallen by 40 per cent.

A survey carried out in December showed public confidence in the police rising to 70.5 per cent from 55 per cent in May.

Najib said such advances had been made through programmes such as the National Blue Ocean Strategy, which saw the police, armed forces, the civil defence force, Rela volunteer corps and auxiliary police unite to cut index crime, street crime and fear of crime at the same time.

"In doing so, we achieved more with less. For example, we spent only RM1 million for the police to use a spare army base for training as opposed to RM200 million on building a new training college."

Najib was delivering the keynote address at the International Conference on Principle Policing: Rule of Law, Public Order and Sustainable Development.

Present were Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Ismail Omar, Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (Asli) chairman Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah and Asli chief executive officer Datuk Michael Yeoh.

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