

Najib: Army training good for govt officers

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BANGI: Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak wants government agencies to consider making it compulsory for all their officers to undergo basic military training.

Such training with the Territorial Army, he said, would not only contribute to the defence strength of the country but would be effective in discipline and motivation.

Speaking after launching the Inland Revenue Board's Territorial Army Corps at the Malaysia Tax Academy here, Najib commended the IRB for making it compulsory for their new officers to join the Territorial Army, attributing the board's increasing revenue collection partly to the training.

Last year, the board collected some RM56.8 billion, while the target for this year is to surpass the RM60 billion mark. To date (from January), IRB has collected some RM45 billion.

Said Najib: "I hope they (other government agencies) will find it useful and consider it. We will not compel them at this stage, and it is up to the leadership of each agency. I think it is good for them."

Earlier, in his speech, Najib, who is also Defence Minister, said the government's target was for the Territorial Army's strength to triple by 2020.

This, he said, was because they were the second line of defence for the country, after the armed forces.

At present, there are 44,000 Territorial Army members compared with 100,000 soldiers in the country.

Meanwhile, Najib urged Mara to come up with better ways and be proactive in recovering unsettled loans from borrowers.

Asked on Mara's plan to collect re-



Najib (left) receiving a souvenir from IRB chief executive Kolonel Tan Sri Zainol Abidin Abd Rashid at the Malaysia Tax Academy yesterday. — Bernama picture

payments in instalments from as low as RM20, Najib said he was waiting for the body's proposals for its debt-recouping methods.

"I'll wait for their proposal before I announce anything. I do not know the repercussions (of low instalments), but Mara must show commitment," he said, also urging those who refused to repay their loans to change their attitude.

On the government's order to defer the police move to slash traffic fines, he said as two different government agencies were involved in enforcement, there must be uniformity be-

tween the Road Transport Department and the police.

"It will be weird for different approaches to be taken by two different agencies for the same offence. The RTD and police must agree on a common decision."

The Umno deputy president yesterday also denied there were attempts by the party to block its former president, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad from becoming a delegate to the coming Umno general assembly.

"There is no attempt by Umno to block him," he said when asked to comment on Dr Mahathir's allegations.