

# So many dialogues, yet crime rate still high

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THE high crime rate in Section 17, Petaling Jaya, has inspired residents and the police to hold a number of crime dialogues over the years.

In spite of this, crime has escalated and residents are still as concerned and sceptical of the efficacy of such discourses.

In the most recent session on Sunday night, however, Bukit Gasing assemblyman Datuk Dr Lim Thuang Seng gave his word to residents, saying: "We are serious about this."

Lim's gravity on the matter was largely contributed by a personal encounter - a band of armed robbers robbed him of his belongings at a coffee shop recently.

More than 60 residents from various parts of the area, Petaling Jaya deputy OCPD Supt Mohamad Shukor Sulong and acting Deputy Supt Sia Siew Keng, as well as Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) secretary Zulkepli Ahmad attended the dialogue that evening.

"The crime index in PJ is about 60 reported cases a day, with a total of 170 reported cases in Section 17 in 2006," said Shukor, adding that the most common thefts were robbery, snatch theft, extortion, burglary and vehicle theft.



**Attentive:** Residents from various parts of Section 17, Petaling Jaya, listening intently during the crime dialogue with the police and Dr Lim.

"The lack of manpower adds to the bleakness of the situation with the ratio of one policeman to 5,500 residents in the Damansara area alone," Shukor revealed.

He said other contributing factors to the crime increase included migration and joblessness.

Residents took the opportunity to recount cases that had happened in the area, as well as air their complaints, suggestions and questions.

Suggestions included conducting

more patrols by plainclothes policeman (suggested by PKNS flats RA chairman (16 blocks) Mokhtar Yaakub), as well as increased patrols by the mobile police station around the neighbourhood so that residents need not make reports at the Damansara station (suggested by Section 17 RA chairman Mohd Salleh Manan).

Constant cases of theft by a suspected 'orang minyak' prompted a Happy Mansion resident to request

for the police to conduct checks within the apartment grounds.

Some residents also boldly questioned the lack of manpower in the police force, as well as the effectiveness of the dialogue.

"These dialogues address matters in the short term. We are interested in knowing what are your plans for the long-term," queried an irate elderly gentleman.

On the lack of manpower, A.S. Foo said: "These constraints (faced by the police) must first be contained before any measure to address the crime rate can be effective. This is crucial in demotivating criminals from striking."

Lim urged the residents to do their part to help the police curb crime, and suggested that they form residents associations and join Rakan Cop as well as Rela to conduct patrols around their neighbourhood.

He also encouraged residents to approach him if there are areas in the neighbourhood that require streetlights.

Shukor also urged residents to be watchful of their surroundings and not panic easily if they saw suspicious vehicles or individuals.

He said residents should make reports that were accurate in order for the police to be more effective.