

Kudos to (wo)men in blue

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Comment

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BEING (wo)men in blue is not always easy. In fact, it is not easy at all to be entrusted with the duty to protect everyone day and night, the whole year round!

Many parents will understand this if they have a handful of children to look after. We often read about kids getting into accidents and trouble if there is a slight lapse of supervision by parents. Of late, it seems to be on an increase.

And each time such unfortunate incidents occur, the next party which gets the blame is the police. The accusation could range from being insensitive to outright negligence.

The frequently posed question is "Where's the police?" instead of "Where are the parents?" This is a knee-jerk reaction. Where the parents failed, the police is supposed to succeed.



Police officers during a swearing-in ceremony at Bukit Aman, Kuala Lumpur

Therefore, there exists a love-hate relationship between the public and the (wo)men in blue. Love because we know we cannot survive without the police to ensure our general security; hate because if things do not turn out the way we want them to, we are quick to point a finger at the police.

Some even go into a frenzy of police bashing, at times seemingly for the thrill of it. That Malaysia today is on the threshold of a new-found freedom of expression makes the spins that much juicier.

Unlike previously, when there was not much room to criticise, suddenly the liberty has allowed verbal outbursts on issues that were once forbidden. Then again, it is the case of the wise having something to say, and fools having to say something!

To make matters worse, the police are expected to take all the criticisms — right or wrong — without any chance to rebut. It is not surprising then that some retreat in defence while many more are demoralised as the public get even more hawkish, sacrificing decorum or *adab* on this new altar of freedom.

Tan Sri Musa Hassan was at the helm of the police force when the new free space to express ourselves unfolded.

There is little concern about creating unwarranted anxiety, if not confusion, among the public and even the police force. This is where Musa made his mark as the top man in blue! He took charge and put things in perspective on a firm footing based on sound policing principles. Among his fellow (wo)men, his orders were swift and sharp. An immediate transfer or show-cause letter was something that was not too difficult to

imagine. He did not mince his words when they were warranted, be it to top-notch politicians and civil servants alike.

He was able to command the respect that the police force needs to carry out their duty well. At the same time, he showed concern for their welfare.

Almost immediately upon taking the top job, he exposed the fact that most police personnel were living below the declared Kuala Lumpur poverty line. Yet many think that the police force owes us a living. Musa managed to better the position of the police force although those in Britain, the United States and Japan are said to be paid higher than civil servants.

So, when Inspector-General of Police (IGP)-designate Tan Sri Ismail Omar says "I have been well trained by Musa. I'm honoured to succeed him", he says it all. Ismail knows that he has to soldier on where Musa left off, and attain even greater trust of the people.

Musa, in return, says that Ismail has nothing to fear if his (wo)men carry out their duties with sincerity — a quality not only the police force but also Malaysians cannot do without. For without it, nothing can be accomplished, especially in building of trust and respect — the glue to cement greater peace and harmony for Malaysia, if not the world, to prosper.

Musa took the bull by the horns, knowing full well that the (wo)men in blue under his able command are keeping a close watch over us. We also know that Ismail has what it takes to make the police force soar to greater heights.

Despite all the odds, we remain convinced that the (wo)men in blue will continue to deliver their promises. On the day of his retirement, we salute the outgoing IGP with utmost sincerity for his commendable public service.

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