

`Afraid to tell cops for fear of reprisal`

KUALA LUMPUR: Police must protect the safety and identity of informants if they want the public to play a role in combating crime.

Malaysia Crime Prevention Foundation vice-president Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye said many people were unwilling to cooperate with the authorities for fear of reprisal.

"To say there is no public involvement when it comes to curbing crime is unfair because there is, but it may not be sufficient.

"Why they are not forthcoming is because they are afraid they will be in trouble if they provide information," he said yesterday.

Lee was commenting on Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein's statement that public cooperation was lacking in the fight against crime despite efforts to get the people involved.

Lee said there was a need to change the public's perception and to continue reminding the people that fighting crime was everyone's responsibility.

"For them, it is the duty of police to take care of the people's safety.

"It is none of their business until they become a victim."

On the other hand, National Anti-Drug Agency Malaysia (AADK) director-general Puan Seri Zuraidah Mohamed said she felt that the involvement of the public with the agency in fighting the scourge of drugs had been "very encouraging".

She said their participation had helped to boost the public's awareness on the negative impact of drugs and, at the same time, had contributed towards crime reduction.

"The crime rate has gone down in places like Chow Kit and I believe we have played our role to help reduce crime with the help of the public."