

05/11/1997

Two elderly men arrested under ISA

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Police arrested two former political and religious activists under the Internal Security Act at their homes in Kedah and Penang early today.

They are Abdullah Hassan, 80, a former Pas supporter from Pendang, and Paharuddin Mustapha, 73, a former Parti Rakyat Malaysia member from Bukit Mertajam.

It was not known if they were sent to the Kamunting detention centre.

Up to this evening, the Federal police headquarters had not issued a statement despite Press queries.

PRM president Dr Syed Husin Ali, who disclosed the arrests in a Press statement this afternoon called upon Home Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to release them.

Alternatively, they should be charged in court, he said.

Syed Husin claimed the Barisan Nasional Government would use the ISA to crack down on its political foes especially at the time when the country faces an economic crisis and Umno, as the most important component member of the government coalition, experiences internal conflicts.

When contacted, Syed Husin said the grounds for detention were not known.

"We expect the police to give the reasons for the arrest, probably in two months after they complete investigations.

"Why should they detain Abdullah and Paharuddin, who are both old men, under the ISA without giving any reason to their families and who ordered the arrest," said Syed Husin.

In Alor Setar, State Pas information chief Suhaimi Ahmad denied that any party member had been arrested under the ISA.

He said Abdullah was formerly a party supporter who later joined the Al Arqam missionary movement shortly before it was banned by the Government for allegedly being involved in misguided teachings.

Following the disbandment of Al Arqam, Abdullah became actively involved in Syariah teachings within the State, he added.

In Penang, Paharuddin, a scrapyard dealer, was believed to have quit politics 20 years ago and his detention under the ISA was puzzling, according to sources.

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