

Thai PM to seek Dr Mahathir's help over Muslim separatist issue

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CHIANG MAI, Fri. — Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said today he would ask Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at a meeting next week to help suppress separatists along the Thai-Malaysian border.

Thaksin, due to visit Kuala Lumpur on April 24, said Thai po-

lice would send a list of "70 to 80" suspected separatists to Malaysian police, and hoped they would be arrested and sent for trial in Thailand.

"I will ask for co-operation because they are bandits who committed crimes in Thailand," Thaksin told reporters on the sidelines

of a workshop to promote the tourism industry.

Thailand was hit by a spate of bombings in Muslim-dominated southern towns early this month.

Thai newspapers have quoted unnamed security sources as saying Muslim separatist groups held a meeting in March in Kuala

Lumpur to plan sabotage in southern Thailand in April.

Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was quoted by Malaysia's **Bernama** news agency as saying Thai separatists might have hidden in Malaysia, but the authorities never collaborated with them. — Reuters