

# Young PAS members advocating violence, says PM

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday that some younger members of PAS believed in violence as the best way to achieve their objectives.

He said that while the majority of PAS members believed in the democratic process, some of the younger ones felt that this route was

slow and not effective to overthrow the Government; so they opt for violence.

"We know that there are PAS members who have gone for military training overseas. Some are involved with the Taliban in Afghanistan and have undergone firearms training there.

"We did not do anything when they came back, but

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now there are indications that they are willing to kill people and rob banks to finance their struggle. We cannot allow that.

"That is why they have been arrested under the Internal Security Act," he told reporters after opening the MCA's 48th annual general assembly.

Dr Mahathir was comment-

ing on the arrest of eight members of a holy war group, Kumpulan Mujahideen Malaysia, under the ISA, including a PAS branch chief.

Asked if there was a tendency among some political parties in the country towards violence, Dr Mahathir said:

"It is true, there is PAS influence among these people (who were arrested). They be-

lieve violence is the fastest and most effective way to achieve what they are fighting for."

Asked to comment on the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia's (Suhakam) report stressing that peaceful assemblies are possible, Dr Mahathir said the commission was only making its stand on the issue.

The commission, he said, seemed only interested in setting their own standard to influence the Government's policy but did not take into consideration the internal security of the country.

"They are free to make recommendations, but the Government will have to consider the interest of the majority of the people," he added.