

PM: Detainees will be tried

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IPOH: The Government is hampered by legal constraints in giving details of those involved in the Kumpulan Mujahideen Malaysia (KMM), Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

The Prime Minister said the Government was facing a problem as the case would be brought to court.

"We do not want to prejudice this case by announcing this and that.

"At the same time, opposition parties use this as a political issue, alleging that it is a Government *sandiwara* (opera) which enables the police to shoot people to death.

"This is very irresponsible," he told a press confer-

ence at the Sultan Azlan Shah airport here before leaving for Kuala Lumpur.

Those detained would be brought to court, Dr Mahathir said.

The Prime Minister was asked by reporters on the latest development on the KMM at the end of his visit here.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir put his signature on the country's biggest *Jalur Gemilang* made by SMK Seri Ampang and witnessed the largest symphony orchestra performance by 312 students and teachers from the Kinta district.

Both feats were entered into the *Malaysia Book of Records*.

Ten people, including Nik Adli, the son of Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat, have been detained under the Internal Security

Act for alleged involvement with the KMM.

Five other members of the militant group, including two Indonesians with Malaysian permanent resident status who were implicated in the murder of Lunas assemblyman Dr Joe Fernandez, are on the run.

Dr Mahathir said rather than turn government actions into political issues, opposition parties should make their stand on the militant issue known to the people.

"If they are afraid that their party is indirectly involved, they should declare that this is not their party's stand and only involved certain individuals who acted on their own," he said.

Citing Nik Adli's case, he said the Government was caught in a difficult situation.

He said if the people were

not informed on such matters, they would not believe it.

But there were laws which prevented the Government from coming out in the open.

Asked about a front-page report in a Bahasa Malaysia daily that there was a shortage of guns in southern Thailand because of demands by arms brokers from Malaysia, Dr Mahathir said:

"The Government had long suspected that weapons were being smuggled from there.

"Arms smugglers are a smart lot and are able to escape detection at border check points."

He said the authorities had realised that KMM members had been buying weapons such as M-16 rifles from various places such as Thailand.

The Government would fur-

ther tighten controls at the border to check the smuggling activities, he said.

Militant groups are known to have secured weapons from other sources as well, he added.

In Alor Gajah, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the emergence of KMM was viewed seriously because of its agenda and approach.

Commenting on a report that the group had six branches in the country with a total membership of 80, he said this explained why the police had to act against the group the way they did.

"The police must go all out in their investigations against the group," he told reporters after performing the groundbreaking ceremony for the Honda plant in Hicom-Pegoh Industrial Park.