

03 SEP 2001

Najib-Lee

NAJIB BRIEFS SINGAPORE'S LEE KUAN YEW ON KMM

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 3 (Bernama) -- Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak today briefed visiting Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew on the threat posed by the Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (KMM) and the steps taken by Malaysia to contain the activities of the militant group.

Lee, according to Najib, said that the emergence of Islamic militancy was a worldwide phenomenon and praised Malaysia's moderate stance in Islam.

He appreciates Malaysia's interpretation of Islam, Najib told reporters after a 40-minute meeting with Lee, who arrived here yesterday for a four-day visit aimed at enhancing ties between Singapore and Malaysia, at the hotel where he is staying.

Najib said that Lee regarded Malaysia's interpretation of Islam as being more tolerant given the fact that there was a growing trend of radical Islamic extremism in the region.

Early last month, the Malaysian police arrested 10 people under the Internal Security Act (ISA) for alleged involvement in KMM activities prejudicial to national security.

A Malaysian, Taufik Abdul Halim, 26, who was detained in Indonesia in connection with bomb blasts at two Jakarta churches and a shopping complex, was also suspected by the Malaysian authorities of being a KMM member.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was quoted as saying last Saturday that KMM had the idea of setting up a so-called Islamic country through the union of three countries -- Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Najib said he also explained to Lee on the networking of the KMM in the region.

The minister said he informed Lee on Kuala Lumpur's position over the KMM and assured him that the Malaysian government's position was strong and solid in terms of the political and economic aspects.

Najib said Lee had also told him that Islamic activities in Singapore had increased and wants both countries to continue to consolidate the existing relationship and also to have more bilateral talks.

Najib said both he and Lee discussed the importance of Malaysia and Singapore having more formal and informal discussions and dialogue to better understand the thinking of both sides.

He also said both countries should strengthen the integration between both countries to face the economic challenges ahead.

"Malaysia and Singapore should have healthy competition for mutual benefit and not view each other in a negative light," he said.

Asked if the issue on the use of Malaysian airspace by the Republic of Singapore Air Force was discussed, Najib said it was not raised at their meeting.

He said it was up to Lee to raise the matter and other outstanding issues between the two countries with Dr Mahathir.

Lee is scheduled to call on Dr Mahathir in Putrajaya tomorrow.

Lee last visited Malaysia in August last year during which he and Dr Mahathir discussed the package of bilateral issues that has on and off strained ties between the two countries.

The issues in the package are a new water supply agreement with Singapore, the relocation of the Malaysian Customs Centre from the Tanjung Pagar Railway Station, the development of Malaysia-owned railway land in Singapore and the withdrawal by Peninsular Malaysians of their Central

Provident Fund (CPF) contributions.

After the meeting with Najib, Lee met Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Rais Yatim.

When met by reporters after the meeting, Rais said he met Lee in his personal capacity.

-- BERNAMA

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