

06 AUG 2001

Mahathir-Nik Aziz

NIK AZIZ DID NOT KNOW WHAT HIS SON WAS DOING, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

LUMUT, Aug 6 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the son of Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat was detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA) because he was a member of Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM) involved in activities to topple the government through violence.

"The extent of his involvement, we have not determined yet. He was detained because he was a member of Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia," the prime minister told a media conference at the end of his one-day visit to the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) Base here today.

Nik Adli Nik Abdul Aziz, 34, a teacher at Sekolah Menengah Arab Darul Anwar in Pulau Melaka, Kelantan, was detained at the Kelantan police headquarters in Kota Baharu at about 10.30am on Saturday for alleged involvement in KMM, a local Islamic militant group, whose activities could undermine national security.

Dr Mahathir said although Nik Aziz said it was normal for Muslims to be involved in the Holy War in Afghanistan, the Kelantan Menteri Besar did not know what his son was actually doing.

Asked whether the government would monitor religious teachers of PAS-run religious schools as they might be involved in KMM, Dr Mahathir said the authorities would have to look at all groups of people.

"One of the detainee is said to be a cake (kuih) seller. Looked very innocent but he was involved with this group, he has learnt to make bombs, detonate bombs," he said.

Dr Mahathir said activities of the group had to be checked immediately because incidents like attacking police stations to seize weapons, bomb explosions in certain places and bank robberies rarely happened before.

In fact, a Barisan Nasional (BN) assemblyman was also shot dead, he said.

Dr Mahathir also denied opposition claims that the detention of several people under the ISA was politically motivated.

"If it was politics, big leaders like Nik Aziz, Hadi Awang, Lim Kit Siang and Fadzil Noor will be arrested. But, we have not arrested them because they did not create trouble, if there is proof of their trouble-making, we'll also detain them," he said.

On the involvement of soldiers in criminal activities, Dr Mahathir said this happened probably because they might have been instigated or the lust to seek wealth and also their ability to use firearms.

"But we are thankful as there are parents who are prepared to persuade their children to surrender. This we appreciate," he added.

-- BERNAMA

AR MAI TS