

'Cops shed light on Al Qaeda'

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KUALA LUMPUR, Pri: The involvement of the 50 Malaysians with the Al Qaeda movement was uncovered by police after questioning some of its members who had been detained.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said one member of the group, who was arrested after robbing a bank, revealed the figure during an interrogation.

From the information, police deduced that the group was also responsible for the murder of a state assemblyman (Dr Joe Fernandez of Lunas) and the attempted arms heist at a police station in Guar Chempedak.

"These people are now being detained under the Internal Security Act," Mahathir said after launching the Youth Chamber of the Malay Chamber of Commerce Malaysia here today.

Mahathir had said in an special interview published by a Japanese magazine. *Chuokoron*, on Wednesday that 50 Malaysians were involved with the Al Qaeda movement.

Asked whether they have links to Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (KMM), Mahathir said: "Yes, they belong to one group but of different cells.

"They use the cell system. One cell has no

knowledge of the other."

When asked whether those involved would be formally charged, the prime minister said in the case of a definite crime such as the murder of the state assemblyman, "if we can find enough proof, we will try them".

On the opposition harping on the death of Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim's son as an issue in the Indera Kayangan by-election, Mahathir said: "Let us not use such an issue without due regard to the grief of a father who has lost a child. It's very crude."

Shahidan's youngest child Ameer Mohamed Fawwaz, three, who shared the same birthday with him, fell to his death from a city condominium here on Dec 10.

Asked on the changes in PAS' accusation which is now saying that only the Sauk arm heist is a drama and not the murder of two security personnel, Mahathir said he personally does not understand the opposition party's twisting of its words.

"I want to know who did the arm heist . . . if it is the same person and the same weapon was used to kill people, how can they say it is a drama.

"The arm heist is the prelude of the murder of two person," he said.