

Concern over terror schools

SUN 28 JAN 2002

MALACCA, Fri: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is concerned about children being sent to Pakistan and other countries for religious studies in madrasah there as he fears they will be indoctrinated in extremist Islamic ideology.

He was shocked when he heard an interview of one young student of a madrasah there who said he wanted to be a holy warrior when he grew up.

Mahathir said those who are sent to the madrasah there are not taught religion but how to overthrow a government and the students will practise what they have learnt when they return to their country.

He was worried that these students could forge links with the Taliban and the Al Qaeda groups and learn about handling weapons, making bombs and tactics of war instead of learning about religion, he told reporters after launching the 20th World Customs Day celebration and its new logo at the Royal Customs Academy in Bukit Baru here today.

He was asked to comment on today's news reports on the recent arrest of 10 suspected members of the second cell of the Kumpulan Militan Malaysia.

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Mahathir said: "They have been trained on all these there and when they return, they will attempt to carry them out here. That's why we know that the murder of (Dr Joe) Fernandez (the former Lunas assemblyman) was committed by them.

"That's also the case when several bombs were exploded and they tried to seize weapons at the Guar Cempedak police station and rob a bank to meet their expenses. All these they learnt there."

Mahathir said the government had taken stern measures against militant groups in the country because if their activities were left unchecked, it would spread further.

He said the government knew that these groups who had gone to Pakistan on the pretext of studying religion had not been taught religion but ways to launch a rebellion and to topple the government.

"We will fight as we do not want any terrorists roaming around in our country and do as they please. Even though they do not attack us, we still cannot accept terrorism."

As to whether there is a need to explain to the international community on Malaysia's stand on the issue, Mahathir said: "There is no need to explain as everyone knows we have taken immediate action and at this moment, no country has accused Malaysia of providing protection to terrorists."