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Dr M: We'll await probe findings

Cheah Chor Sooi

PUTRAJAYA, Wed. - Malaysia will wait for Singaporean authorities to complete their investigations before deciding whether to request the extradition of the Malaysian businessman who was arrested for suspected terrorist activities in the republic.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysia might file a request to extradite the suspect, Faiz Abu Bakar Bafana, 39, a former Singaporean who is now a Malaysian citizen, if there were criminal charges against him.

"An extradition is normally for criminal cases... for other cases we do not normally extradite.

"But we will look into charges placed by Singapore against him.

"If investigations (by the Singapore authorities) reveal that he has committed a criminal offence, then we will look into it (seeking extradition)."

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters after attending the Home Ministry's Hari Raya reception at the KDN Complex.

Also present were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and other Cabinet ministers.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir's wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali presented "duit raya" to some 230 orphans from the Pertubuhan Kebajikan Anak-Anak Yatim dan Miskin Klang, Pertubuhan Kebajikan Anak-Anak Yatim dan Miskin Sungai Pinang, Klang, Asrama Anak Yatim dan Miskin Hulu Gadong, Rembau and from schools around Putrajaya.

Deputy Home Minister Datuk Zainal Abidin Zin said recently that Malaysia would request for Faiz's extradition as the Government would like to interrogate him as part of its efforts to establish the link between terrorist groups in the region.

Faiz, from Gombak, was arrested with 14 others under the republic's Internal Security Act between Dec 9 and 24 for alleged involvement in terrorism-related activities.

Zainal Abidin said the Government had discovered a link between terrorist groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan with similar groups in Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia, but needed more information to establish the extent of their co-operation.

On the visit by Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi tomorrow, Dr Mahathir said his meeting with the Japanese leader would focus on bilateral issues, which include economic ties and terrorism.

"Maybe issues on education and human resources highlighted by Asean + 3 will also be discussed," he added.

Koizumi, who is making a week-long visit to five Asean countries beginning today, will be in Malaysia for two days.

This is Koizumi's first visit to the region since becoming Prime Minister last June.

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