

12 JAN 2003

Mahathir-JI

MORE JI ARRESTS EXPECTED, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KAMPAR, Jan 12 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today there is a possibility that more members of the Jemaah Islamiah (JI) group will be arrested soon.

He said the authorities knew their movements and would arrest them when the time came.

He said this when asked to comment on the arrest of two religious school teachers who are suspected JI members in two raids in Sandakan, Sabah, yesterday.

Asked whether reports linking the country with international terrorism undermined Malaysia's position as host of next month's Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit, Dr Mahathir said this question did not arise at all.

"No problem. They have no opposition to Malaysia becoming the host," he told a news conference after performing the ground-breaking ceremony for the Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) main campus here.

Instead, member countries felt that the NAM meeting was a good opportunity for the movement to look into the issue of terrorism and make a stand, he said.

Kuala Lumpur will host the summit of the 114-member NAM from Feb 20 to 25 at the Putra World Trade Centre.

Asked about the dengue disease, Dr Mahathir said it was not right to put the entire responsibility of fighting it on the government.

"It is always the government. No government can ever prevent the people from getting some disease or other," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the authorities had advised the people to take the necessary measures, including not to allow stagnant waters in various places which could turn out to be a breeding place for aedes.

"The people help the spread of disease by being careless. No matter how the government tries, if the people don't cooperate, no way we can stop the spread of dengue," he added.

He also said educating the people was better than meting out severe punishment.

"We want the press to help educate (the people). The press is always asking me what the government is doing. I want to ask what the press is doing (to educate the people)," he said.

-- BERNAMA

AR YBY