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Negri passport scam hits the front page

By Balan Moses; Ramlan Said

AN Immigration officer in Negri Sembilan has been detained under the Internal Security Act for passport forgery while another officer in Penang has disappeared after his involvement in the scam was discovered, Mingguan Malaysia reported on its front-page yesterday.

The paper said both men were not members of the same syndicate, but had a similar modus operandi.

Immigration director-general Datuk Jamal Kamdi said both men had penetrated the department's computer system to commit the forgery. "Their activities were uncovered following the arrest of three Chinese nationals in possession of Malaysian passports," he said in Port Dickson.

Jamal was quoted as saying that two of the Chinese nationals were detained at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport, while the other was traced when his passport application was being processed.

"Investigations showed that the passports were genuine, but contained false information about the holders."

In another story from Kelantan, some 200 people "employed" by a company reported for duty at their workplace only to find that the premises was a pawnshop.

The group was offered various positions in the company which conducted walk-in interviews at the Machang, Pasir Puteh and Tanah Merah Youth offices on Tuesday.

A spokesman for the group, Mohd Ali Daud, told the paper that those selected were asked to pay RM48 for workers' passes and insurance cover.

"Only when we reported for duty did we discover we had been duped and that the address was actually a pawnshop."

Berita Minggu highlighted claims by a Fifth Former of SMK Taman Molek in Johor Baru that he was assaulted by some 20 schoolmates over a misunderstanding.

Mohd Shamsudin Abdul Sukor, 17, who sustained injuries to his arms and body, said he believed the assault stemmed from an earlier incident when one of the students stepped on his foot during recess.

"I told him off in a nice way and did not anticipate that he would gather his friends to assault me after school."

Shamsudin recalled another incident when the same student tried to attack him in front of the school's toilet, but backed off when a teacher passed by.

A Mother's Day story in Berita Minggu related the hopes of a mother for the return of her son who has been missing for 20 years. Azizah Hassan, 70, said she had not heard anything from her second child, Abdul Wahid Abu Hassan, since 1984, the last time he returned to their home in Bukit Belimbing near Kuala Selangor.

Mingguan's feature pages carried interviews with former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, with the focus on the occupation of Iraq and its prisoner abuse scandal, and Prof Datuk Dr Syed Hussein Alatas who dwelled on the issues of corruption and integrity.

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