

03/08/2003

## Chronology of events

### NIGHT of July 23

A cheating case turns bizarre. Police looking for conmen find and arrest three men in a hotel in Cheras trying to sell military ranks and uniforms.

July 24

Police are led to a semi-wooden shoplot in Jalan Pantai Dalam where they find a cache of weapons, uniforms and computer equipment.

They reveal the existence of a paramilitary movement which boasted thousands of members nationwide.

The group is identified as the Federal Special Forces of Malaysia, which is believed to have been selling military ranks and uniforms to the public.

Fifteen men and six women arrested, including the group's alleged leader Nor Azami Ahmad Ghazali.

Police say they got wind of FSFM's activities a month prior to the arrests and had begun their investigations then.

July 25

The magistrate's court orders 23 FSFM members, including Nor Azami, to be remanded until July 28 to help in investigations into a cheating case. They are being investigated under Section 420 of the Penal Code which carries a maximum jail term of 20 years and whipping.

July 26

At least 200 more people come forward to help the police investigate the FSFM.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says Nor Azami is crazy to think he can topple the Government by setting up his own special forces.

In Kuantan, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak expresses shock that people are cheated into buying military ranks and uniforms for thousands of ringgit.

Police learn that the unregistered body had been operating for five years.

Interviews reveal that some members were offered datukship. Those who enlisted also claimed to have paid RM10 in application fees and RM150 for authority cards, tags and handcuffs.

They were told a monthly allowance of RM50 would be paid.

Some members were led to believe that by increasing their investment in the company, they would be eligible for higher ranks.

July 27

More than 800 reports are lodged by FSFM members nationwide, mostly professionals, businessmen and civil servants.

A Seremban businessman holding the rank of "colonel" and the position of state commander is taken into custody and remanded until July 31.

July 28

The Defence Ministry warns that it will act against soldiers found to be FSFM members. This included dismissal.

Police say they have detained almost all FSFM commanders and deputies - 17 with the rank of "brigadier-general" and 12 "colonels".

Those who have not surrendered are told to do so or face the consequences.

Police say that from July 25 to 28, 1,664 people who enlisted with the FSFM have surrendered.

Remand order of Nor Azami extended until Aug 1.

July 29

Police arrest two more FSFM commanders and another deputy, bringing the number of commanders and deputy commanders detained since July 25, to 34.

The two commanders with the rank of "brigadier-general", one of them a lecturer at Universiti Teknologi Mara, are picked up in Pahang and Terengganu while the deputy commander with the rank of "colonel" was detained in Kuala Lumpur.

Police say they have received more than 2,200 reports to date.

July 30

Police arrest 76 key members, including 34 State commanders and deputy commanders, since the crackdown on the group started on July 25.

Operations chief Assistant Commissioner Abdul Rahim Jaafar says police are still tracking down at least four more State leaders - two from Sarawak and two from Selangor.

More than 2,500 police reports received so far.

In Seremban, four ex-majors from the armed forces remanded to facilitate investigations into their involvement in the FSFM.

July 31

A top FSFM commander in Selangor detained at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport upon his return from Jakarta.

Police say preliminary investigations show the FSFM is not a threat to national security.

An Umno Youth division head with the rank of "colonel" surrenders to police.

Abdullah says to date, police have arrested 84 senior members while 2,637 others surrendered.