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Focus on paramilitary movement

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THE big story in the nation's two main Bahasa dailies over the last two days has been the discovery of the shadowy paramilitary movement called Federal Special Forces of Malaysia.

Berita Harian's editorial on Saturday deliberated at length on the subject, notably the need to curb the activities of "suspicious" organisations and groups.

It said initial police investigations had uncovered some disturbing facts about FSFM, like its ability in recruiting some 8,000 members and the sale of senior military ranks.

Berita Harian said for example the Al-Ma'unah group which appeared to be a silat or self-defence group was actually planning to overthrow the Government through violent means.

Yesterday, both dailies front-paged comments from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the group's activities, in which he described its leader's intention to eventually lead the nation as a crazy plan.

Earlier reports stated that the group's leader, Nor Azami Ahmad Ghazali, wanted to become the country's sixth Prime Minister.

The issue of lafaz cerai (divorce declaration) through the short messaging service continued to be reported by Mingguan Malaysia and Berita Minggu yesterday.

Both dailies quoted Women and Family Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Jalil as saying that such a method was an insult to women.

She regretted the action of men who dumped their wives through the SMS compared to the many difficulties they were prepared to face when proposing marriage.

She was commenting on a decision by the Gombak Timor Lower Syariah court which annulled the marriage of a couple after it deemed valid a SMS from the husband divorcing his wife.

On another subject, Berita Minggu reported that a report on the study of Sekolah Agama Rakyat (SAR) has been submitted to the Government for further action.

It quoted the chairman of the committee tasked with the study, Tan Sri Murad Mohamed Noor, as saying that the report was submitted to Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi at a meeting in Putrajaya, which was also attended by Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad.

The former education director-general said all aspects on SAR had been considered in the study.

These included the financial capability, infrastructure and human development.

SAR came under the spotlight after the Government suspended aid to such schools as many were found to propagate the culture of hatred among their students, besides having poor academic performance.

In the features page, the paper carried an exclusive interview with Second Finance Minister Datuk Dr Jamaludin Jarjis.

The focus was on plans to build 150,000 units of affordable houses as announced under the stimulus package last May.