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PRIME NEWS

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2 soldiers, 3 terrorists killed

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DEATH TOLL RISES: One soldier killed in a gunfight while another was involved in an accident while driving to Bandar Cenderawasih

LAHAD DATU

THE death toll on the eighth day of Ops Daulat yesterday climbed as two soldiers and three terrorists were killed in separate incidents here.

A soldier was killed while another was injured when they were involved in a gunfight with terrorists in Sungai Nyamuk near Kampung Tanduo.

Three terrorists were also killed

in the same incident.

The second soldier was killed in an accident while driving from here to Bandar Cenderawasih.

The death toll now stands at 66—nine security personnel, 56 terrorists and one unidentified teenager.

While the death toll climbed, word out of Manila in the Philippines showed positive signs that the terrorists might adhere to Malaysia's call to lay down their

arms and surrender unconditionally.

Interior Secretary Manuel Roxas II and Bantilan Esmail Kiram II, brother of the self-proclaimed Sultan of Sulu, Jamalul Kiram III, held a closed-door meeting in Camp Crame, Quezon City.

The *Philippine Inquirer* reported that its Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) would relay to Malaysia several questions raised by Jamalul's brother, related to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's earlier pronouncement about surrendering.

"I will convey this to the President (Benigno Aquino III) and the DFA Secretary Albert del Rosario will convey these questions to the Malaysians as well," said Roxas.

Meanwhile, all is not doom and gloom in the Felda Sahabat area as

security forces were making progress in securing several villages previously occupied by the terrorists.

This had brought renewed hope to the almost 3,000 displaced villagers seeking refuge at three evacuation centres in Embara Budi, Fajar Harapan and Bandar Cenderawasih here.

The evacuees also received a surprise yesterday when Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin visited them and announced that they would receive RM1,000 each while homes destroyed or damaged would be repaired or rebuilt.

"As an immediate assistance, RM1,000 will be given to heads of

family from the affected villages."

He, however, added that only Malaysians would receive the assistance.

Muhyiddin also visited SMK Desa Kencana where he told teachers and students to be thankful for the presence of the security forces in the area to ward off the threat from the terrorists.

In Kuala Lumpur, Deputy Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar said action would be taken against those who insulted the security forces involved

in Ops Daulat.

"How can you say such things while our security forces are there fighting for the safety and security of our country?"

