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# 'Terror threats are real'

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**SECURITY:** PM warns against complacency, commends police on sacrifices for nation

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THE country's security forces cannot take the threat of terrorism lightly, especially in the wake of numerous attacks across the world, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said yesterday.

"Terrorism threats are real. It is a reality in the world and we cannot take it lightly or be lackadaisical about it. The police force needs to be strict and go all out so that our people can live in a peaceful and safe environment," he said at the 209th National Police Day celebration at the police training centre here.

Najib thanked and commended the efforts of the members of the force who worked day and night to serve the nation and its people.

"Our country is very lucky, even though we have seen many incidents taking place in Jakarta, Paris, Ankara and the latest, Brussels. Our country is still safe and this is because of efforts by the police."

On the Digital Counter Messaging Centre, which had been established to combat terrorism and the spread of Islamic State (IS) in the country, Najib said it would be fully operational on April 1.

The prime minister's speech added emphasis to his blog posting from the previous night, in which he urged security personnel to "always be one step ahead" in facing possible terrorist threats.

In the posting, he said challenges faced by the police and security per-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar at the 209th National Police Day celebration in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Pic by Alzuddin Saad

sonnel today in dealing with violence were harder than in the past.

"Our enemies are now smarter, more cunning and unpredictable. To prevent is better than to cure. As the saying goes, we don't want to 'sudah terhantuk baru tengadah' (react only once something has happened)."

He wrote that Malaysia was lucky to be blessed with stability and peace, adding that the public could go about their daily business without fear as police and security agencies dealt with threats swiftly and effectively.

"We've seen the news and read reports on terrorist groups being foiled by the Special Branch, Special Action Unit and police before they can strike.

"In today's climate of uncertainty, the government has taken precau-

tions, like stationing policemen in crowded areas and tourist hot-spots."

Najib said Malaysia had achieved peace and stability due to the contributions and sacrifices of the men and women of the police force.

"They (police) are not doing all this merely to be praised. They risk their lives daily because they love this country and want to ensure its safety. It is time for us Malaysians to appreciate the sacrifices they have made for our beloved homeland."

The prime minister's blog posting comes in the wake of the arrests of 15 suspected members of an IS cell linked to the terror group's Malaysian recruiter, Muhammad Wannady Mohamed Jedi, who is in Syria.

The arrests of the 11 men and four women put paid to their plans to

carry out bomb attacks.

Sources told the *New Straits Times* that the cell received orders from Wannady to carry out suicide bombing attacks in Malaysia.

They were said to have looked into procuring chemicals and bomb-making materials.

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar had announced their arrests on Thursday, saying they had been nabbed in a series of special operations carried out by Special Branch Counter-Terrorism Division operatives here, in Perlis, Kedah, Penang, Perak, Selangor and Terengganu between Tuesday and Thursday.

Among the suspects were a policeman, 35, and aviation technician, 39. Other suspects included an imam and a housewife.

Khalid had said that the cell was

also involved in collecting funds for an IS-affiliated terror group in southern Philippines and Malaysian IS fighters in Syria, recruiting fighters to Syria and smuggling two wanted terrorists to another Southeast Asian country.

The four female suspects were planning to join their comrades on the front line in Syria.

The policeman, attached to the Selangor police contingent, was said to be connected to members of several IS cells, and had planned to join IS in Syria. Additional reporting by Zafira Anwar