

# Tracking down terrorists

## PM: Tougher security measures on the cards

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Wed.** — Malaysia plans to introduce tougher security measures, such as the Advanced Passenger Information System (API) and biometrics technology, to identify suspected terrorists or dangerous criminals before they even set foot in the country.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, in a written reply to a question from Loh Seng Kok (BN-Kelana Jaya) in Parliament, said: "The API would enable us to track a terrorist or criminal as he travels between countries."

Loh had asked about measures taken to thwart terrorist activities.

Abdullah, who is also Internal Security Minister, said that API was one of several measures the Government was looking into. The API, he said, involved the co-operation of two or more countries.

Other security measures may include the use of biometrics technology by the Immigration Department for identification by retinal scans, fingerprints and the voice.

Such security measures have been used by the United States since the Sept 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York's World Trade Center.

Abdullah said police regularly exchanged intelligence reports with their foreign counterparts through Aseanapol and Interpol, while the Immigration Department worked with the Asean Immigration and Consular Directory.

"Security at entry points into Malaysia has also been tightened, with round-the-clock surveillance by officers prepared for any eventuality," he said.

To ensure terrorism did not take root in Malaysia, Abdullah said the Special Branch closely monitored

groups suspected of militant or terrorist activities.

"This is how we managed to detain members of Kumpulan Militan Malaysia and Jemaah Islamiyah under the Internal Security Act. Thus, we have managed to avoid any untoward incidents," Abdullah said.

He said the Government had agreed to sign eight United Nations conventions on various terrorist threats, in addition to the three conventions and a UN protocol already signed.

"At the same time, the Government decided to amend the Penal Code and the Anti-Money Laundering Act to strengthen the legal system and punish those involved in terrorist activities."

Abdullah noted that at an Asean meeting on terrorism, Malaysia had offered to organise an anti-terrorism seminar incorporating intelligence training.

Malaysia, he said, had also signed a memorandum of understanding with the US and Australia to strengthen co-operation on security and curb international terrorist threats.