

Govt may use ISA on those sending ^{The Star} offensive SMS _{-8/11/2006}

KUALA TERENGGANU: The Government is considering the use of the Internal Security Act – besides the Sedition Act – to deal with culprits whose actions are tantamount to instigating others and eventually stirring instability in the country.

The move would also target those who spread lies and rumours through the SMS with malicious intent, said Deputy Security Minister Datuk Mohd Johari Baharum.

“Remember, ours is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation. Any malice-intended content could lead to untoward incidents,” he told reporters after visiting the Terengganu state police headquarters here yesterday.

“We have to mete out punitive punishment on these culprits to deter others from repeating or disseminating such lies and rumours.”

Mohd Johari was commenting on the incident in Ipoh resulting from an SMS that claimed a group of Muslims would be baptised at the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes in Silbin on Sunday.

A large crowd had gathered at the

church to protest against the purported baptism, which turned out to be an event to mark the first Holy Communion for 110 children.

On speculation that the person who first sent out the SMS is a “Datuk,” Mohd Johari said: “The probe is ongoing and we have to wait for the outcome.”

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Musa Hassan had said that the police would charge the culprit under the Sedition Act for sending out the offensive SMS, which also implicated national mariner Datuk Azhar Mansor.