

## The man, the terrorist, the fugitive

■ **Jan 23, 1961:** Born in Kendal, Central Java, and migrates with family to Singapore. The youngest of several siblings, Mas Selamat grows up in a kampung in Kaki Bukit and attends the English-language Kaki Bukit Primary School.

■ **1980s:** Moves to a flat in the Bedok Reservoir area and later marries Nurlela Sahali. They have five

children, four boys and a girl. Believed to have worked as a bus mechanic.

■ **1990:** Joins Darul Islam, a movement that had fought for an Islamic state in Indonesia in the 1950s. The Darul Islam is believed to have spawned several key leaders of the Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist network, including its founders.

■ **1992:** Recruited into the religious council of the Singapore JI cell.

■ **1993:** Goes to Afghanistan for military training.

■ **1998:** Goes to Afghanistan again for one month, this time to observe the Taleban system of government.

■ **1999:** Alleged JI operations chief Hambali chooses him to take over as the leader of JI operations in Singapore.

■ **December 2001:** Flees Singapore after the Government cracks down on JI terrorists and nets 13 suspects. Makes his way to Medan and then Bali in Indonesia, via Malaysia and Thailand.

The arrests thwart plans to attack the Yishun MRT station and US naval vessels in Singapore.

In revenge, Mas Selamat is believed to have discussed with Hambali a plan to crash an American, British or Singapore plane into Changi Airport.



When arrested in Indonesia in 2003, Mas Selamat had a genuine Indonesian passport, issued in Surabaya, with a false identity. The name on the passport was given as Edi Haryanto. ST FILE PHOTO

# Lead came from S'pore

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came the head of the Singapore chapter of the regional terror group, and first emerged on the radar of regional intelligence agencies in early 2002.

That was after he threatened to hijack an aeroplane to crash into Changi Airport, in retaliation against the arrests of dozens of suspected JI operatives in Singapore and Malaysia several months earlier. The threat was never carried out.

Intelligence provided by Singapore led to Mas Selamat's first arrest by the Indonesian authorities in February 2003 on Bintan Island. He was jailed 18 months for immigration offences.

A botched escape attempt during his imprisonment left him with a broken left leg and a permanent limp.

He was not handed over to Singapore after he served his prison term and went missing for about five months.

Again, with the help of intelligence from Singapore, he was captured a second time by the Indonesian authorities in early 2006 for using a fake identity card. This time, Indonesia granted Singapore's request to extradite him.

He was handed over in February 2006 and was immediately detained under the Internal Security Act.

He was held here from then until his escape on Feb 27 last year from the Whitley

Road Detention centre.

In the inquiry that followed, it emerged that Mas Selamat broke free that afternoon by duping his guards during a toilet break.

While the guards waited for him, he climbed through an unsecured toilet window, had a soft landing on a mound of toilet paper rolls he had collected beforehand, bounded over two perimeter fences and vanished.

A massive manhunt followed, first in the areas surrounding the detention centre and then across Singapore, and in heavily forested areas.

As months went by with no sign of the escaped terrorist, there was speculation that he had fled Singapore, or might even be dead.

The fallout from his escape resulted in the sacking or demotion of nine prison guards and ISD officials, including the commander of the Whitley Road Detention Centre and his superior.

The authorities also came under severe fire for allowing precious minutes to elapse before the escape - which took around 49 seconds, when re-enacted - was reported.

Deputy Prime Minister and Home Affairs Minister Wong Kan Seng described the mistakes and security lapses that had occurred as being "so simple as to appear silly and incredible".



2003: Mas Selamat Kastari is snapped leaving the Tanjung Pinang police station under heavy guard by a special squad unit from Riau to the airport bound for Pekanbaru. ST FILE PHOTO

For a long time the Singapore authorities said they believed that Mas Selamat was still in Singapore. But in an interview with The Straits Times in January this year, DPM Wong said the fugitive was either still in Singapore, hidden by sympathisers, or had fled the country - a scenario he said was "more plausible".

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