

STRAITS TIMES.



Not just Garden City, but Sky Garden City

■ LIFE! PAGES E14&15



More young people turning to Buddhism

■ SATURDAY SPECIAL, PAGES D1-7

INTERVIEW WITH TEO CHEE HEAN
Civil servants keep S'pore safely afloat

■ INSIGHT, PAGE A34



FOR BREAKING NEWS GO TO www.straitstimes.com REACH AND INTERACT ON www.stomp.com.sg SMS MMS 75557 1800-777-5557 WATCH OUR VIDEOS ON www.razor.tv

INSIDE 200 PAGES IN NINE PARTS

VESAK DAY GREETINGS

The Prime Minister sends his greetings to all Buddhists on the occasion of Vesak Day. The Straits Times also sends Vesak Day greetings to all its Buddhist readers.

Aware's sex ed courses

SENIOR Minister of State for Education S. Iswaran said that after a Ministry of Education probe was conducted into Aware's sexuality education programme, "there's a sense that they have exceeded the guidelines".

He added that parents were "quite right" to express concern about some parts of the programme.

■ PRIME PAGE A16



RSAF gets 4 F-15SG jets

Singapore's Air Force has taken possession of its first four F-15SG fighter jets (above). The aircraft, equipped with advanced air-to-air missiles and sensors not used outside the United States, are part of the Republic's move to modernise its military.

■ HOME PAGE B2

Condo buyer in trouble

ANOTHER buyer who purchased luxury condominiums in bulk under the deferred payment scheme is having trouble paying up. Keppel Land says an Indonesian investor who bought 51 units at The Suites @ Central in Devonshire Road has asked for more time to cough up the final payments.

■ MONEY PAGE C27

The new Chinese CEOs

THEY jetsset around the world and are well-versed in Wall Street lingo.

Meet China's new breed of state-owned company chieftains who are executing a key national mission: to drive China Inc's expansion overseas and up the Fortune 500 charts.

■ WORLD PAGES C1-2



CALL 6388-3838 TO SUBSCRIBE OR GO TO www.sphsubscription.com.sg

Mas Selamat was PLOTTING HITS ON S'PORE

He was 'planning a lot of things' when he was caught, says Najib

BY CHUA LEE HOONG
POLITICAL EDITOR

JEMAAH Islamiah (JI) terrorist Mas Selamat Kastari was plotting attacks on Singapore at the time he was captured in Johor on April 1.

Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak disclosed this to Malaysian media yesterday, hours after Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister Wong Kan Seng told local media the JI leader escaped Singapore by swimming across the narrow stretch of water that separates Singapore from Johor, with the help of an "improvised flotation device". (See story below)

Datuk Seri Najib told Malaysian report-

ers: "We apprehended him here (in Malaysia), his main focus at the time was Singapore. He was planning a lot of things in Singapore."

He did not provide details, but said he had "mentioned this" to Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong when they met in Pattaya, Thailand, on April 10-11 for the Asean summit that was eventually aborted because of protests.

Mr Lee was "very happy and grateful that Malaysia has succeeded in apprehending Mas Selamat", said Mr Najib.

Mas Selamat, leader of a group of Singaporean JI members, escaped from the Whitley Road Detention Centre on Feb 27 last year.

He was captured in Johor on April 1, according to regional intelligence sources The Straits Times spoke to.

This was confirmed by Mr Wong at a press conference in Singapore yesterday, the same day The Straits Times broke the

Improvised float helped him escape to Johor

MAS Selamat Kastari escaped from Singapore by swimming across the Johor Strait with the help of an "improvised flotation device", Deputy Prime Minister Wong Kan Seng told reporters yesterday.

The fugitive fled from Singapore to Johor "soon after" his escape from the Whitley Road Detention Centre on Feb 27 last year, Mr Wong said, citing information provided by the Malaysian authorities.

He also said such flotation devices were often used by illegal immigrants attempting to enter Singapore undetected.

The devices could be as simple as plastic bags filled with air and tied together,



Improvised flotation devices such as rubber tyres or plastic tubes tied together are often used by illegal immigrants trying to slip into Singapore undetected. ST FILE PHOTO

rubber tyres, plastic tubes tied together or biscuit tins tied together, he said.

Mr Wong, as Home Affairs Minister, is also in charge of the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority.

He stressed that despite the capture of Mas Selamat, officers manning the checkpoints must continue to be vigilant.

"Singapore is a small country. It has a

news of the capture.

Mr Wong said that as far as the authorities know, no local JI network was involved in aiding Mas Selamat's dash from Whitley to Singapore's northern shore.

Mr Wong, who is also Home Affairs Minister, said the Singapore Government did not inform the public of the capture earlier because doing so could jeopardise operational secrecy and perhaps even endanger sources of information.

The Malaysian Special Branch (MSB) and Singapore's Internal Security Department (ISD) both avoid premature disclosure that can compromise ongoing investigations, he noted.

"For example, sometimes, intelligence obtained from interviews of arrestees may put us on the trail of other terrorists. In such instances, premature public revelation of the first arrest would cause the other terrorists to flee, and compromise our ability to capture them," he explained.

In the case of Mas Selamat, intelligence provided by ISD late last year helped the Malaysian authorities to make the arrest on April 1, he said.

Two Malaysian JI terrorists were arrested the same day, according to other reports.

"ISD has been following many leads. At the end of last year, one of ISD's own leads helped to pinpoint where Mas Selamat could be hiding. When it was generally satisfied that the information was credible, we passed the information to Malaysia," said Mr Wong.

Replying to a question about the role of the Singapore public, he said a lot of information was provided but none proved credible, and it was ISD's own information that led to the breakthrough.

He noted that ISD officers had been in constant touch with their Malaysian counterparts, as with their other regional counterparts, to exchange information.

Mr Wong said the Malaysian authorities informed Singapore of the April 1 arrest "soon after" it occurred.

Mas Selamat is currently being held un-



8 pages of reports
PRIME PAGES A2-10

SEE ALSO
■ EDITORIAL, PAGE A24
■ FORUM, PAGE A39

der the Internal Security Act in Malaysia.

"The Malaysian authorities want to interview him, and in good time he will be returned to Singapore," Mr Wong said.

He pointed out that Mas Selamat is still technically under a Detention Order issued by ISD and last renewed in March last year.

When Mas Selamat is returned to Singapore, he will be sent back to Whitley Road Detention Centre, he said.

"But today's Whitley Road is a very different detention centre from the one he fled. We have now made it very difficult for anyone to escape from there," he said.

Mas Selamat's latest arrest is his third since 2003, and each time information provided by ISD proved crucial, noted Mr Wong.

The first time was in February 2003 when the Indonesian authorities caught up with him on Bintan Island. 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.

He was captured a second time by the Indonesian authorities in early 2006 for using a fake identity card. This time, he was handed over to Singapore in February 2006.

He was held at the Whitley Road Detention Centre until his escape on Feb 27 last year.

Recalling Mas Selamat's past escapes, Mr Wong noted that he had told Parliament at its sitting on Feb 5 this year: "Whether Mas Selamat is in Singapore or he has fled our country, we will hunt him down as we did before."

"And this is indeed what has happened," he said.

leehoong@sph.com.sg



Once you are **aware**, you can't shut up and sit down.

SMS "AWARE" to 9734 4058 or turn to front page of Section D for details.



SUBARU HUB 18 LORONG 8 TOA PAYOH, TEL: 6417 0300 • SUBARU @ LENG KEE 25 LENG KEE ROAD, TEL: 6475 5333
SUBARU @ UBI 1 KAKI BUKIT ROAD 1, #01-28, ENTERPRISE ONE, TEL: 6743 0030 www.motorimage.net

AUTHORISED DEALER: CAR TIMES AUTOMOBILE PTE LTD
#01-14, AUTOMOBILE MEGAMART, TEL: 6355 5111
WEST COAST CAR MART, LOT 17, TEL: 6778 9111