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Pray for our country's heroes, says Najib

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has called on Malaysians to pray for the country's heroes as they risk their lives battling enemies in Sabah.

"As I speak, our country's heroes are risking their lives in an ongoing operation right now.

"Let us pray for their safety and for the country's enemies to be defeated and eradicated once and for all," he

said during his working visit to Tenaga Nasional Bhd's (TNB) headquarters here yesterday.

He also thanked TNB for offering prayers to the national heroes who had lost their lives in Lahad Datu and Semporna.

Najib later witnessed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between TNB and the 1Malaysia Housing Programme

(PR1MA) to build homes in Kajang for qualified staff.

The homes would be built on a TNB-owned 3.2ha piece of land which is located near a proposed MRT station, said Najib.

Najib also brought cheer to the TNB staff when he denied rumours that the company would be split into clusters or smaller companies with different responsibilities.

"I deny this. This is not the Government's intention at all.

"And I guarantee that the Government will ensure that TNB remains a distinguished integrated utility.

"We want to see TNB as a regional champion," said Najib.

Najib also expressed hope that

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TNB would continue to be a dynamic and vibrant organisation that provides reliable service, including sufficient electricity supply for the future.

He also announced that the TNB scholarship annual allocation would be increased to RM50mil.

Security forces expand hunt

Shootouts at three locations in another village



LAHAD DATU: Shootouts with an unspecified number of gunmen occurred in Kampung Tanjung Batu after Malaysian security forces expanded their hunt for the armed invaders who were earlier holed up in Kampung Tanduo.

The security forces have widened their hunt from the village, about 160km from here, towards Kampung Tanjung Batu, some 2km from Kampung Tanduo yesterday.

The shootouts had reportedly occurred in three locations from 4.15pm.

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Ismail Omar said police and military personnel were moving into Kampung Tanjung Batu at about 3pm when the shootings occurred.

"We believe we have killed some of the enemy although we cannot confirm the number for now. There are civilians at Kampung Tanjung Batu," he said, adding that no Malaysian security members were hurt.

Earlier, at 6.45am, security forces are believed to have shot dead a Sulu gunman at Tandau after they were fired upon in their mopping-up exercise.

Ismail said the police and military personnel had expanded their operational area following reports that some of the gunmen, who are said to be followers of the self-proclaimed Sulu Sultan Jamalul Kiram III, had slipped out of Kampung Tanduo and into Kampung Tanjung Batu.

Some 30 army trucks with soldiers as well as armoured personnel carriers and security vehicles were seen moving through Felda Sahabat yesterday before going to Kampung Tanjung Labian, which is located next to Kampung Tanjung Batu.

On claims by the Kiram family



Battle ready: Army personnel in an armoured vehicle moving into Tanjung Labian.

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that the gunmen had taken four Malaysians – two policemen, a soldier and a senior government officer – as hostages, Ismail said: "I don't have that information."

Armed Forces chief General Tan Sri Zulkifeli Mohd Zin, who was at the press conference, said the gunmen had moved to Kampung Tanjung

Batu from Kampung Tanduo apparently for tactical reasons.

"They are very good at tactical deployment. We are searching for more weapons in our mopping-up operations in Kampung Tanduo. We believe some of the weapons have been buried," he added.

Security forces had earlier seized a cache of weapons during the operation there.

Operation Daulat, which entered its second day yesterday, is to flush out the remnants of the Sulu armed group after Tuesday's aerial and artillery assault on Kg Tanduo.

But a number of the terrorists were believed to have slipped out of

Kg Tanduo, with Tanjung Batu villagers reporting seeing up to 50 gunmen on Sunday night and a dozen or so the following night before the 7am bombings.

It is not known if their leader Raja Muda Azzimudie Kiram and his so-called royal Sulu army commanders were among those who entered Tg Batu, about an hour's walk away along the shore.

The joint police and military elite teams are believed to be moving towards some 100 houses within Kg Tg Batu and Kg Tg Labian from where families have fled on hearing about the arrival of Sulu gunmen on Sunday night.

It is believed that some 15 gunmen or so could be hiding in Kg Tg Batu with families who are unable to leave the area which has been declared a Red Zone.

The fate of Azzimudie remains unclear as the Kiram family in Manila keeps claiming that they were still in contact with him while some villagers claimed yesterday that they heard that he got out of Tanduo some time ago.

According to the official count, nine bodies of Sulu gunmen had been recovered, but sources claimed that some 50 bodies of the estimated 130 gunmen were scattered around in Tanduo.