



Singapore Sends Terrorist Leader's Photo to Phones in Manhunt

By Shamim Adam

March 7 (Bloomberg) -- Singapore sent the photograph of an alleged leader of the al-Qaeda-linked Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist group to mobile phones as it appealed for the public's help in tracking down the fugitive.

Mas Selamat bin Kastari has been on the run since escaping from the toilet at a detention center Feb. 27, prompting the government to order a manhunt involving thousands of policemen and ask Interpol to issue a global security alert.

The island state's three mobile-phone operators, Singapore Telecommunications Ltd., StarHub Ltd. and MobileOne Ltd., sent Kastari's photo to their 5.8 million **subscribers**. Volunteers handed out **posters** of the escapee at subway and bus stations and pasted them on apartment block bulletin boards.

“At this point of time, he's fighting for his survival,” said **Rohan Gunaratna**, head of the Singapore-based International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research. The Singapore government accused Kastari of planning to hijack a plane in order to crash it into Changi Airport.

The government, which spends more than a third of its annual budget on defense and security and says terrorism is its greatest threat, apologized to the public for Kastari's escape. The

suspect was detained by Indonesian authorities in February 2003 and deported to Singapore two years ago.

“Singapore has a foolproof security system but any system can suffer a lapse,” Gunaratna said.

Kastari is the alleged leader of the Singapore network of Jemaah Islamiyah. The Indonesian and Australian authorities blame the group for the 2002 nightclub bombing in Bali that killed 202 people, including 88 Australians.

Australian Embassy

It is also blamed for a Marriott Hotel bombing in Jakarta in 2003 that killed 12 people, a bomb explosion outside the Australian Embassy in Jakarta in 2004 that killed at least nine people and a second attack in Bali in 2005 that killed 23 people, including three suicide bombers.

The Southeast Asian terrorist group wants to turn Indonesia into an Islamic state.

Kastari was being held under Singapore's Internal Security Act, which allows for detention without trial, when he escaped.

Interpol posted a so-called Orange Notice for Kastari that means his photographs and fingerprints will be issued to each of the international police organization's 186 bureaus.

The island state set up a committee to investigate the escape and recommend measures to improve security.

Kastari may be hiding in Singapore or may have escaped to Indonesia, Gunaratna said, adding he doesn't expect an attack on the city as terrorists need time to “conceptualize” a strike.

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