

PRISON ESCAPEES

'NO PRESSURE TO EXTRADITE 11 UIGHURS'

China made formal request in accordance with deal, says Zahid

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MALAYSIA denies it was pressured by China to send back 11 Uighurs who escaped from prison in Thailand last year.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said China had officially request-

ed an extradition.

Zahid, who is also home minister, said police were investigating whether the suspects were involved in militant activities, such as with the Islamic State group.

"It is the responsibility of the police to investigate and they are, in fact, working with their counterparts in China on this issue.

"Malaysia stands by the Mutual Legal Assistance agreement it has with China, so there is no issue of any pressure from any party.

"Malaysia has also used the same agreement to extradite its citizens who were caught for involvement in a fake credit card syndicate last year.

"So, any party or other coun-



Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and his wife, Datin Seri Hamidah Khamis, at a gathering with new students at Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia University in Batu Pahat yesterday. PIC

BY MOHD AZREN JAMALUDIN

tries should not worry about the steps taken by Malaysia to investigate, or even if when we decide to extradite the 11 Uighurs."

Zahid said this after attending a gathering with new students at Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia University here.

Present were his wife, Datin Seri Hamidah Khamis, Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin and Deputy Transport Minister Datuk Ab Aziz Kaprawi and Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr Wahid Razzaly.

Zahid was responding to a Reuters report that Malaysia was

under pressure to hand over the suspects to China, and not Thailand. He said no time frame had been set on when the 11 suspects would be extradited.

At the gathering, Zahid reminded students to prepare themselves for a challenging future that could be unpredictable, especially if they lacked skills that were in demand.

Zahid said the government emphasised education to develop high quality human capital.

He said the government also provided many allocations for education, from early childhood to institutions of higher-learning

Zahid said the government invested a lot in higher education because it wanted Malaysia to be developed, and 60 per cent of its workforce had either diplomas or first degrees.

"Most leaders in the country are products of a successful education system.

"Those who point fingers and say the system is wrong have to look at themselves and ask what have they done to contribute to the betterment of the system."

Zahid also announced a RM2 million allocation for the development of the university's new campus in Tanjong Laboh.