

Mahathir gives the nod for security fence

NSI 30 OCT 1961



Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir

IPOH, Thurs. — Malaysia will build a security fence at the Kroh check-point along the Perak-Thai border to curb smuggling and infiltration by communist terrorists.

Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad said work on the approximately 12-mile long fence will start as soon as allocation is made and all preparatory plans are completed.

This decision follows the 1,000 per cent increase in Customs revenue when a 17-mile border fence at Padang Besar,

Perlis, was erected in 1979.

While business at the Kroh-Betong border is not as flourishing as at the Padang Besar-Haadyai point, the Prime Minister said the fence would discourage smuggling, especially of drugs into Malaysia.

Surrender

He said it will also obstruct the movement of communist terrorists, if not fully stop them, from entering the country from their hideout in the Betong salient.

The fence, which is expected to cost about \$10 million will stretch from

Bukit Perenggan at the Perak-Kedah border eastward to Lembangan Nenering, about 12 miles away.

Speaking at a Press conference at the end of his two-day state visit to Perak, Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir said the security situation here was generally more stable, showing an improvement over the past years. He said there had been an increase in the surrender of communist terrorists and fewer cases of booby traps against security forces patrolling the border area.

Asked about the Thai-Muslim refugees who are

still living with relatives in the Kroh area, the Prime Minister said the government would like to see them return to Thailand if they feel safe and happy about returning.

"But they'll be allowed to stay here for as long as there is a need for them to stay.

"We're doing this strictly on humanitarian grounds. There are just a small number of them and we don't mind if it's for a temporary stay.

"But we will not accept large number of refugees," he said, in a reference to the thousands of Vietnamese boat people who have deluged the Malaysian shores.

On security along the 72-mile East-West Highway which is expected to open in the middle of next year, the Prime Minister said security forces will be located at strategic points and if necessary, there will be patrols along the highway to ensure it is completely safe for public use.

There has been concern here about safety along the East-West Highway which cuts across the communist terrorists' infiltration route.