

MAHATHIR-RETUM

81 (P)  
KUALA LUMPUR, FEB. 17 (BERNAMA) — ACTING PRIME MINISTER (DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD) SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS TRYING TO WORK A SCHEME TO BRING INDONESIAN WORKERS LEGALLY INTO SABAH AND SARAWAK TO MEET THE MANPOWER NEEDS OF THE TWO EAST MALAYSIAN STATES.

SPEAKING TO NEWSMEN ON HIS RETURN HERE TODAY FOLLOWING HIS FOUR-DAY VISIT TO SABAH WHERE HE MET WITH PRESIDENT SUHARTO, HE SAID THE INDONESIANS WHO NUMBERED MORE THAN 100,000 IN THE TWO STATES, WERE HARDWORKING AND THEY WERE DOING A "USEFUL" JOB IN MEETING THE LABOUR SHORTAGE THERE.

"QUITE A NUMBER OF THE INDONESIANS" IN SABAH AND SARAWAK, HE ADDED, CAME IN LEGALLY THROUGH ARRANGEMENTS MADE BY THE INDONESIAN CONSULATE.

BOTH HE AND PRESIDENT SUHARTO, HOWEVER, DID NOT DISCUSS THE ILLEGAL INDONESIAN IMMIGRANTS IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA.

—BERNAMA MORE 1831/AN

NO99 (F)

MAHATHIR RETUM 2, KUALA LUMPUR

ASKED TO COMMENT ON REPORTS LINKING TO RISE IN THE CRIME RATE TO THE ILLEGAL INDONESIAN IMMIGRANTS, HE SAID MOST OF THOSE ARRESTED WERE NOT INDONESIAN, AND THOUGH THERE WERE A FEW INDONESIANS ARRESTED, THE INCREASE IN CRIME RATE COULD NOT BE ATTRIBUTED TO THEM EXCLUSIVELY.

THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER ALSO DISMISSED A LOCAL PRESS REPORT THAT THE GENERAL ELECTION WOULD BE HELD NEXT YEAR.

ASKED WHEN THE SABAH STATE ELECTION WOULD BE HELD, HE SAID: "DATUK HARRIS SALLEH HIMSELF DOESN'T KNOW, SO HOW CAN I KNOW?" 50

REFERRING TO HIS TALKS WITH PRESIDENT SUHARTO ON THE CURRENT SITUATION IN KAMPUCHEA, HE SAID THEY WERE "MORE OR LESS IN AGREEMENT WITH WHAT THEY WERE DOING" AT PRESENT.

THERE WAS, HOWEVER, NO INDICATION WHEN THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON KAMPUCHEA CALLED BY THE UN RESOLUTION, COULD BE CONVENED, HE ADDED.

—BERNAMA 1835/AN