

Labour flow to be controlled

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By AMIN OMAR

LABUAN, Tues. — Malaysia will work towards regulating the in-flow of the "much-needed" Indonesian labour force, said **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** here today.

Saying the matter of Indonesian workers was discussed with President Suharto in Tawau yesterday, the acting Prime Minister said the entry of Indonesian workers should be conducted in a proper manner.

Malaysia wanted these foreign workers as legal labour and not as illegal immigrants, he said at a pre-departure press conference after a four-day visit to Sabah.

He did not elaborate on the proposed regulations.

Asked about Indonesian illegal immigrants now in the country, **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir** said: "We will legalise them if possible, otherwise we will send them back."

Although he exchanged views with President Suharto on international matters, the thrust of the informal talks was on furthering economic co-operation, specifically on energy supply and motor cars.

He said he obtained from the President a firm commitment for the supply of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and coal — the former for use by motor vehicles and the latter for electricity and industries, particularly

billion allocation under the Fourth Malaysia Plan, he said the amount asked for was "big" and came to about one-fifth of the plan's total allocation of about \$40 billion.

He realised Sabah needed a bigger allocation, but he was also aware that the State was capable of obtaining alternative financial sources.

He added that the Fourth Malaysia Plan will be tabled in Parliament next month.

He said that during his talks with the Indonesian President, he expressed Malaysia's gratitude to Indonesia for allowing Indonesians to come to Malaysia to work.

"The Indonesians are good workers and they have helped in Malaysia's development," he said.

He estimated that there were more than 100,000 Indonesian workers in Sabah.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said it was unfair to put the entire blame on Indonesian workers for crimes in certain areas, although some may be involved.

The acting Prime Minister, however, said Malaysia only needed to import foreign workers for certain areas where there were labour shortages.

Study

"If other countries can take our workers, then we can take workers from other countries," he said.

He cited Saudi Arabia and Singapore as among those using Malaysian manpower, but said: "These are friendly countries and the presence of our workers there does not mean we must start a confrontation with them."

cement.

Malaysia, he said, was conducting a feasibility study into the use of LPG as a substitute for petrol in motor vehicles.

Malaysia's LPG will not come on-stream for some time yet and the LNG, which will be available earlier, was not suitable for motor vehicles.

It was essential for Malaysia to know whether Indonesia could supply

the LPG in case the studies show that the switch from petroleum could be effected immediately.

The quantum of LPG supply from Indonesia was not mentioned, but President Suharto assured Malaysia that Indonesia will be in a position to fulfil her needs.

On coal, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said it was essentially for the cement industry and new electricity power stations.

Oil, the present energy source for both, was expensive and the switch to coal would stabilise cement prices and electricity rates, he said.

On his visit to Sabah, the acting Prime Minister said it had been most beneficial and he was satisfied with the rate of development in the State.

Asked whether this will mean Sabah obtaining the requested \$8

A large crowd of State dignitaries, led by Chief Minister Datuk Harris Salleh, bid the acting Prime Minister farewell at Labuan airport.

In Jakarta, *Bernama* reports that Indonesia will supply coal from its mines in Sumatra for Malaysian power plants.

Mines and Energy Minister Prof Subroto said the mines were close to Peninsular Malaysia and there were adequate supplies to meet Malaysia's needs.