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DR MAHATHIR WELCOMES PHILIPPINE SPECIAL OFFICE ON SABAH IF...

Mahathir-Philippines

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ALOR SETAR, Oct 22¹⁹² (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir ~~Mohamad~~ said today he welcomed the Philippines' setting up of a special office to handle the Sabah claim provided the move was to improve relations with Malaysia.

+If it is to cause problems, we will be disappointed,+ he told reporters after opening the Kedah Umno convention here.

He was commenting on a news report that the Philippine government had set up a special office to study the Sabah issue and explore new approaches to improving Philippine-Malaysian relations.

On Filipinos in Sabah, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia did not hold them back if they wanted to return to their country.

+There is no reason for us to be accused of not treating them well. If they wish to do so, the 300,000 Filipinos in Sabah can return (to the Philippines) whenever they want to,+ he said. -- more

▼22/10/21-50MST

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Mahathir-Philippines 2 (last) Alor Setar

He also said that when the Filipinos are sent back to their country, they would return to Malaysia.

+So, you want to send a consul. to look after the interests of -the Filipinos in Sabah? They are illegal immigrants who should return to their country,+ he said.

Asked how Malaysia would overcome the problem, the prime minister said Malaysia could do nothing else but send them back to their country.

+Because we are not able to patrol the waters, they return. If our country is not that good (for them), they should not return,+ he said. -- Bernama

▼22/10/21-51MST