

▼31/05/15-13MST

U GE 31-05 00196 E257

REPEAT aae tbe

Mahathir-Spratlys

DISCUSSION THE KEY TO RESOLVING SPRATLYS ISSUE, SAYS MAHATHIR

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ALOR SETAR. May 31- (Bernama) -- The overlapping claims on the Spratly islands involving six countries should be resolved through discussion, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the countries concerned should determine the basis for discussion, whether it be history, tradition or the legal aspects in their efforts to resolve the issue.

"If we have decided on any one principle, then we settle the problem according to this principle, and not any other that only benefits us," he told reporters after holding a Hari Raya Aidiladha "open house" at his residence in Titi Gajah here.

Yesterday, Philippine Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs Rodolfo Severino said in Manila that the six countries laying claim to the Spratlys would meet in the Philippine capital tomorrow to discuss joint development programmes for the islands to avoid confrontation.

The Spratly islands in the South China Sea are being claimed in part or in whole by China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Vietnam, the Philippines and Brunei.

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REPEAT aae tbe

Mahathir-Spratlys 2 Alor Setar

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia would put forward several suggestions at the talks.

On the UN-sponsored national election in Cambodia, Dr Mahathir said the situation looked good as the voter turnout exceeded 90 per cent.

There were also no major attacks or sabotage by the Khmer Rouge, he said.

He said these developments showed that the results of the polls were acceptable to a majority of Cambodians.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia did not take sides and would accept the outcome of the election.

The counting of votes is in progress after the conclusion of Cambodia's first multi-party election in decades. -- more

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Mahathir-Spratlys 3 (last) Alor Setar

Agriculture Minister Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid, Perlis Menteri Besar Dr Abdul Hamid Pawanteh, Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Haji Osman Aroff and state executive councillors were among those who called on Dr Mahathir at the "open house".

Dr Mahathir and his wife, Datuk Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, returned to Kuala Lumpur this afternoon. -- Bernama

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