

30 AUG 1996

UP TO SABAH TO DECIDE ON PASSPORT RULE FOR OTHER MALAYSIANS

KOTA KINABALU, Aug 30 (Bernama) -- Sabah should be allowed to decide on its own whether to continue requiring non-Sabah people to use a passport to enter the state, at the appropriate time, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

However, the Prime Minister said, as far he knew the regulation had so far not caused many problems to other Malaysians who visited Sabah.

"I think there is none (problem in entering Sabah). I don't know of any problem. Peninsular (Malaysia) people who want to come here can do so, and people from here can also go to the peninsula without any problem," he said in response to questions from reporters after he launched the "Malaysia Boleh, Sabah Boleh" (Malaysia Can, Sabah Can) campaign here.

"When the time is ready, Sabah will have to decide," he added.

He was asked whether there was still a need for Sabah to continue to apply the passport rule for Malaysians from other states when they visit Sabah.

Retention of the immigration power, including the use of passports to enter Sabah, was a pre-condition for the state's agreement to join the Malaysian Federation in 1963.

However, the passport rule was abolished for people who enter Sabah through Labuan after the island was handed over to federal administration and declared a Federal Territory in the mid-1980s. -- BERNAMA

JS KG CTL