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Abdullah-Aliens

DISCUSSIONS TO OVERCOME ENTRY OF ILLEGAL ALIENS AT BORDER

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 28 (Bernama) -- Senior Malaysian and Thai officials have begun talks to seek ways to resolve the problem of illegal entry of immigrants at the common border, Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

"They have started the preliminary rounds and will continue with further discussions to resolve this problem," he said after bidding farewell to Thai Prime Minister Jeneral Chavalit Yongchaiyudh at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport at Subang. Chavalit was here for a two-day visit.

Abdullah described the talks as a good development as it showed that immediate action had been taken even while the Thai Premier was still in Malaysia.

Recent news reports stated that over 30,000 illegal immigrants are on the Thai side of the border, awaiting to enter Malaysia.

Last month the Thai authorities detained more than 200 illegal aliens, most of whom were Bangladeshi and Myanmar nationals.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in his speech at a dinner he hosted for Chavalit last night, expressed Malaysia's appreciation of the Thai government's efforts to help solve the problem.

Abdullah said he reminded the Thai Foreign Ministry Permanent Secretary, Saroj Chavanaviraj, that Malaysia truly wanted to overcome the problem in 60 days as agreed to by both governments in their talks yesterday.

Abdullah described Chavalit's visit as most fruitful although he was here only for a brief period.

"A lot was achieved in his two days here, which goes to show that both leaders have good understanding," he added. -- BERNAMA

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