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Mahathir-Immigrants

MAHATHIR ASKS MYANMAR TO HELP DEPORT ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 25 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has asked the Myanmar government to help Malaysia to deport 8,000 illegal immigrants from Myanmar.

Malaysia is facing a problem deporting them to Myanmar as the Myanmar government did not regard them as its citizens.

The Prime Minister conveyed the request to Myanmar Deputy Premier Vice-Admiral Maung Maung Khin who paid a courtesy call on him at the Prime Minister's Office here today.

Last week, Deputy Home Minister Datuk Seri Megat Junid said Malaysia was unable to seek the assistance of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees as the 8,000 illegal immigrants are not considered as refugees because no war has been declared in Myanmar.

Dr Mahathir also told Maung Maung Khin that Malaysia did not prevent foreign nationals from working in the country on condition that they observed regulations when entering the country, Foreign Ministry's Southeast Asia and South Pacific Undersecretary Encik Mohd Arshad M Hussain told Bernama after the meeting.

He said Dr Mahathir also asked the Myanmar government to provide incentives to draw more investors especially from Malaysia to the country.

Dr Mahathir was confident that Malaysian investors had the capability to play a role in the economic development of Myanmar.

On Myanmar's entry into Asean, he said Dr Mahathir expressed hopes that Myanmar together with Laos and Cambodia could join the grouping as soon as possible.

Mohd Arshad said that among other things discussed were the Asian train project from Singapore to Kunming in southern China and telecommunications.

Dr Mahathir invited Myanmar to participate in the project.

Maung Maung Khin, meanwhile, said the political situation in Myanmar had improved and hoped more Malaysian investors would come to the country.

He also thanked Dr Mahathir for Malaysia's willingness to lease a commercial aircraft belonging to Malaysia Airlines (MAS) to Myanmar airlines. -- BERNAMA

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