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Thailand to help check illegals from entering

PETALING JAYA, Mon. - Thai Foreign Minister Prachuan Chaiyasan said tonight that his country would assist Malaysia in checking foreign workers from entering Malaysia illegally.

"I am aware of the illegal workers problem and I will discuss with the officials here how my country can help," he said in an interview upon arrival at the Sultan Abdul Aziz airport for a three-day visit.

On hand to welcome him were Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Leo Michael Toyad and Thai ambassador to Malaysia Dr Vikrom Koompirochana.

Chaiyasan was accompanied by his wife Taptim Chaiyasan and a 21-member delegation comprising senior Foreign Ministry officials.

The visit is the first for him since his appointment by the new Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh.

Asked whether he was aware that many foreign workers were using bases such as Narathiwat and Takbai in Southern Thailand before being smuggled to Penghulu Chepa and Bachok in Kelantan and Besut in Terengganu, he said:

"I am aware but there are technical issues that both countries need to address."

During his visit, Chaiyasan will also call on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and will hold discussions with Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi on bilateral, regional and international issues.

Among the regional issues that will be discussed are the Asean-10 and the Indonesia-Thailand-Malaysia Growth Triangle.

As for bilateral relations, Chaiyasan said there were no problems between the two countries.

"I would like to exchange views on regional co-operation with Abdullah, since he holds the Asean chairmanship for this year's meeting to be held here," he added.

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