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Abdullah: Continue with present arrangement

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - The present arrangement that facilitates the smooth operation of train services between Malaysia and Singapore should be allowed to continue.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today Malaysia was happy with the arrangement and that efforts had been made not to create problems with regard to the endorsement of passports and this had contributed to the smooth running of Keretapi Tanah Melayu's train services.

"I would like to see this as a reflection of the understanding by both the Malaysian and Singaporean authorities of the importance of this train service.

"It is a friendly train. A goodwill train. A popular train. Malaysians, Singaporeans and others have been using these train services and I believe neither Singapore nor Malaysia would like to see this service interrupted," he said.

Abdullah was speaking to reporters at Wisma Putra after bilateral discussions with visiting Foreign Minister of China Tang Jiaxuan.

He said he had earlier briefed Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the issue including the discussions that had taken place and action taken.

Abdullah said goodwill should prevail between the two countries as they were neighbours.

"There is certainly an inextricable relationship between Malaysia and Singapore that we should not ignore. There have always been problems in our bilateral relations. I do not remember any one particular year that we did not have any problem at all.

"There are problems but the most important thing is how we resolve these problems. We can only resolve the problems if we continue to bear in mind that the interests and relationship of our two countries are given priority," he said.

Asked what would happen if the present arrangement were changed, he said he did not wish to speculate on that.

"If things are working well today, we must not disrupt them tomorrow, that would mean there are bad intentions," Abdullah said.

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