

23 MAR 1998

Mahathir-Passport

DR MAHATHIR LAUNCHES MALAYSIAN PASSPORT WITH ID CHIP

KUALA LUMPUR, March 23 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today launched the Malaysian new passport, the first in the world to incorporate identity chip of its holder.

The chip, part of the highly security features of the passport, stores personal particulars of the holder including fingerprints and photograph.

The chip is developed by a Malaysian company, Iris Technologies (M) Sdn Bhd.

Dr Mahathir was also issued with the new passport after the launching ceremony at Iris Smart Complex, Technology Park Malaysia here.

Others issued with the new passport were Human Resources Minister Datuk Lim Ah Lek, Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayob, Deputy Home Ministers Datuk Tajol Rosli Ghazali and Datuk Ong Ka Ting, Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali, Public Services Department Tan Sri Dr Mazlan Ahmad and Home Ministry Secretary General Datuk Samsuddin Osman.

The new passport will be available to the public in the Klang Valley from tomorrow, Immigration Director-General Datuk Aseh Che Mat told reporters.

He said it will be introduced in other parts of the country in stages.

The passport which still costs RM300 for 32-page and RM600 for 64-page, is not renewable after five years.

--BERNAMA

AZZ ABG