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Mahathir-Immigrants

INDONESIA AGREES TO TAKE BACK ITS IMMIGRANTS, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, March 29 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Indonesia has agreed to the deportation of its nationals who entered Malaysia illegally.

"We have obtained the agreement of the Indonesian government to send (illegal immigrants detained in temporary camps here) back," he told reporters after receiving Indonesian Vice-President B.J Habibie at Seri Perdana, here.

The prime minister was responding to a question from an Indonesian journalist as to the best solution agreed upon by both countries.

He expressed sadness over the rioting at the Semenyih detention camp on Thursday which resulted in the deaths of eight illegal immigrants and a Malaysian Federal Reserve Unit personnel.

"We hope that such a thing will not recur," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia and Indonesia faced similar problems, hence the need to understand each other's stand and analyses.

"If there is a way or an approach to overcome this problem we should do it together," he added.

On the Asia-Europe Meeting (Asem) in London on April 2-4 which he will be attending, he said he discussed the meeting with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl when he was in Hannover recently.

Kohl had suggested that the boat people problem be raised at the meeting and to do this, Malaysia had to know Indonesia's stand because as neighbours, whatever happened to Indonesia would have an effect on Malaysia, Dr Mahathir said.

Habibie said after the hour-long meeting that the talks centred on efforts to upgrade bilateral cooperation and to overcome global problems.

Habibie later left for London to attend Asem. -- BERNAMA

MNY JK