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PM: Brunei keen to boost investments in Malaysia

Ashraf Abdullah in Bandar Seri Begawan

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Brunei was considering increasing its investments in Malaysia, especially in the properties and hotels sector.

Dr Mahathir said although Brunei had voiced its intention to invest more in Malaysia, there had not been much progress because it was also affected by the financial crisis.

"I do hope there will be more progress after this," Dr Mahathir told reporters at the Darut Takwa guest house after an audience with the Sultan of Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah at Istana Nurul Iman.

He said they also discussed the possibility of allowing those living at the border of Miri in Sarawak and Kuala Belait in Brunei to be allowed to enter each other's country without passports.

Dr Mahathir said currently those living at the border had to stamp their passports each time they crossed the immigration checkpoint, some as many as 16 times a day.

He said officers of both countries had been instructed to study the possibility of issuing special passes to those living at the border.

This, he added, was similar to the passes used by Malaysians and Thais who lived near the Malaysia-Thailand border and had to travel into each other's country daily.

Dr Mahathir said Brunei had also requested that Malaysia increase its air space control for the Royal Brunei Airlines from the present 14,000 feet to 40,000 feet.

"We will study the request and make a decision or a counter-proposal."

He said Brunei also proposed to send more students to pursue higher education in Malaysia.

Asked by Brunei reporters on the situation in Malaysia after the sacking of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, Dr Mahathir said the foreign media continued to give the impression that Malaysia was in perpetual chaos although there were no riots.

"I agree that there are demonstrations by a small group of people here and there, but the foreign media gives the impression that the whole country is in turmoil."

He said as the foreign media was not interested in showing the real situation in Malaysia, the Government could only try to get more foreigners to visit the country.

He said delegates to the Commonwealth Press Union conference, which ended in Kuala Lumpur last night, saw for themselves that there were no riots.

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