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Kadir-Immigrants

MALAYSIA SEEKS INDON HELP TO CHECK EXODUS OF IMMIGRANTS

ALOR SETAR, March 21 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has officially asked Indonesia to help stem the flow of immigrants from that country into Malaysia in view of a sharp increase in illegal landings recently.

Deputy Home Minister Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir said Malaysia was holding discussions with Indonesian authorities on ways to prevent their people from leaving the country illegally.

The Indonesian armed forces and marine were among those in the best position to check the problem, he said.

"Stopping them in their own country is more effective than enforcement in this country which involves high costs like those incurred in conducting operations and providing holding centres," he said.

He told reporters this after a meeting between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Barisan Nasional component leaders at Dewan Seri Negeri, Wisma Darul Aman here.

Abdul Kadir was commenting on newspaper reports which said that some 30,000 Indonesians are believed to be waiting at Tanjung Pinang for a chance to sneak into Malaysia by sea.

The economic problems in Indonesia are believed to have driven Indonesians to head for Malaysia in search of jobs.

Abdul Kadir said the government was confident that Indonesia would cooperate to overcome this problem because the two countries enjoyed good relations.

He said the immigration, police and army had intensified operations against illegal immigrants in the past few weeks.

From these operations there had been a significant increase in the arrest of Indonesian immigrants, he said without giving figures.

-- BERNAMA

MZM YBY