

PM: Indon illegals to be sent home

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'They will cause problems and are a burden to us'

LANGKAWI, Tues: Malaysia will deport illegal Indonesian immigrants who are unemployed, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said many illegals in the country are unemployed and end up causing problems to their host in terms of costs.

"If we have jobs for them, that is fine; but quite often, they come here without any idea whether they can get employment.

"If they are unemployed, obviously they would create problems because somebody would have to feed them and house them.

"That is a cost to us, so those who are here and who have come in illegally have to be sent back," he said at a

joint press conference with Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid after bilateral talks at a leading hotel here today.

Abdurrahman said Indonesia will continue to work with Malaysia on finding a solution to the illegal migration of its people to Malaysia.

He said there is no new statement over the matter and Indonesia is negotiating with Malaysia on the plight of its workers.

"We will resolve it jointly. We have an agreement to deport them back to Indonesia with the costs borne by both countries," he added.

Abdurrahman is on a two-day working visit to Malaysia - his first ever visit to the island resort of Langkawi,

and his second working visit to the country.

He is accompanied by wife Sinta Nuriyah and a 50-member delegation, including four full ministers - Foreign Minister Alwi Shihab, Energy and Minerals Minister Pornomo Yusgiantoro, Labour and Transmigration Minister Al Hilal Hamdi, and Industry and Trade Minister Luhut Panjitan.

The two nations also issued a joint-communique condemning Israel in the use of force which has already caused the death of over 100 Palestinian civilians and injured thousands more, including children.

Other matters announced after the bilateral talks were on the continued coopera-

tion in oil exploration and production, and the development of Batam island as an "Asean City."

Mahathir also said that Malaysia respects Indonesia's sovereignty over West Timor and will support Indonesia in its quest to handle the matter within the confines of an Indonesian approach.

Both sides, however, did not discuss at length issues related to the forthcoming annual Asian-Europe Summit in South Korea.

Meanwhile, in an unrelated matter, Mahathir said he would be attending the Asian-Europe Summit (Asem) in Korea.

He added that the talk of him not going is just a rumour.