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Speedy 'Touch-and-go' passport clearance at KLIA from Aug 1

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Malaysian passport holders passing through the Immigration checkpoint at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport will, from Aug 1, need to only flash their passports against a sensor machine, as is done with the touch-and-go card at highway toll plazas.

Thanks to the introduction of "autogates" by the Immigration Department, clearance for departures as well as arrivals will be speeded up.

All travellers need to do is tap their passports onto the autogates where a sensor will pick up the data contained in the document.

If everything is in order, the gates will automatically open. The passport will then be considered as having been stamped.

Immigration director-general Datuk Aseh Che Mat said for a start, the facility would only be available at KLIA where one entry and exit lane would be installed with the automatic gates.

He said its use would be extended in phases at the country's other major entry and exit points.

He was speaking to reporters after attending the opening of the Malaysia Incorporated Summit 2000 at Hotel Istana by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

However, Aseh said, only holders of the high-security passports would be able to use the facility.

The department started issuing the passports in 1998 and to date, some one million have been issued.

By 2003/2004, all Malaysian passport holders are expected to use the new document.

When pointed out that Malaysians could be accused of leaving the country illegally if their passports bore no exit stamps, Aseh said Malaysian missions had been asked to inform the immigration authorities of their host countries of the new facility.

On forms required to be filled up by travellers, Aseh said they could be dropped into a box to be placed beside the gates.

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