

# PM: No need to take control of airspace

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ALOR STAR, Fri. — There is no immediate need for Malaysia to take over the control of airspace in certain parts of the country which is now being managed by Singapore, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said this was because the airspace may be controlled by Singapore but payment made by airlines for use of the airspace was returned to Malaysia.

“The airspace may be controlled by Singapore but the fact is that they have to pay fees to us.

“For every plane that flies through Malaysian airspace, even if it under Singaporean air traffic control, payment is made to us,” he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Government could get the same returns without having to make large investments in equipment needed to manage air traffic control of the airspace.

“So we don’t think we should waste time in having our own radar at the moment,” he added.

Asked how the payment was made by private planes flying in such airspace, Dr Mahathir said:

“I suppose all planes (have to pay) hut collection from private planes is not much . . . it is the big passenger planes that pay a lot.”

The Prime Minister was speaking to reporters after the closing ceremony of the 2002 Malaysia Unit Trust week here.

He was asked to comment on

whether there was a need for Malaysia to buy the necessary equipment to take control of airspace in certain parts of the country which was being handled by Singapore.

A pilot, Captain Adnan Rashid, had written to the *New Straits Times* to highlight the matter.

The arrangement is in place because Malaysia lacks radar, ground equipment and human resources to undertake the control and management of airspace over the whole country.

As a result all aircraft, civil or military, domestic or foreign flying from Kuala Lumpur to Kuching or Kota Kinabalu and back, will have to get approval from Singapore for instructions on what level they can fly.