

# **Respect Malaysian laws, Indons told**

STAR 3 0 AUG 2002

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KUALA LUMPUR: Indonesia, assuring Malaysians that the country is safe to visit, has warned its people to respect their neighbour's laws on foreign labour.

The republic's ambassador here, Hadi Wayarabi Alhadar, said there was hope for his countrymen to return as Malaysia was reopening its doors to Indonesia's labour force in various sectors.

He stressed, however, that those wishing to work here must abide by Malaysian laws and procedures.

The envoy criticised individuals and groups in his country for fanning the issue but, he said, the Indo-

nesian police were investigating them.

He echoed the views of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that the groups of radicals did not represent the stand of the people and government of Indonesia.

Urging all concerned to take heed of the instruction by President Megawati Sockarnoputri that Indonesia's relations with Malaysia should be safeguarded, Hadi said it was time to put the controversy behind and move on.

"It (the tension) is in the past, it's over. We will look at the future.

"As the ambassador here, I will expect that tomorrow

holds good for both our people and our countries.

"So, let us start anew," he said after hosting an Indonesian Cultural Evening to mark the republic's 57th National Day at the Malaysian Tourism Centre here on Wednesday.

Hadi said he had met top Wisma Putra officials to discuss the advice to Malaysians not to visit Indonesia for the time being, purportedly to protect them from any harm.

"I requested that (this advice) be reconsidered. In fact, there is nothing to

worry in Indonesia.

"We respect Malaysians like our brothers. It is safe to go to Indonesia as our police have stepped up security," he added.

He said the "huge figure" of 380,000 Indonesian illegal workers here had been safely deported home.

To a question, he said there was still a small number of Indonesian illegal workers here, adding that his embassy hoped to deport them with "the approval of Malaysian authorities".

Hadi was posted here in August 2000.