

08 OCT 2002

Mahathir-Visa

MALAYSIA HAS NO PLANS TO IMPOSE VISA RESTRICTIONS, SAY DR MAHATHIR

PETALING JAYA, Oct 8 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has no plans to impose visa restrictions because it is "silly" and a nuisance to those who want to visit the country, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"It is a nuisance and we don't want to be a nuisance to people who want to come to Malaysia," the prime minister said at a news conference after launching the Malaysia-China 2002 Economic Conference, here.

He was asked whether the government planned to impose stricter visa restrictions on certain countries which were said to be among the reasons for the United States' and Canada's imposition of tighter visa restrictions on Malaysians.

Canada had from Sept 24 imposed a ruling that Malaysians wishing to travel to that country had to apply for the Canadian temporary resident visa. The reason given was that the Malaysian passport was allegedly vulnerable to abuse.

All this while, Malaysian citizens could enter Canada on a visa waiver programme as both countries are members of the Commonwealth.

On Sept 31, the US imposed a stricter entry and exit legislation subjecting visitors to increased scrutiny through registration, fingerprinting and photographs.

The action was the result of a US Congressional initiative to implement an entry-exit system that increases scrutiny of nationals of all countries at the US border.

Of late, the US embassy has taken a long time to approve visa applications by Malaysians planning to travel to that country.

-- BERNAMA

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