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Mahathir-Airspace

NO IMMEDIATE NEED TO TAKE OVER AIRSPACE MANAGEMENT FROM S'PORE, SAYS PM

ALOR SETAR, April 26 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that there is no immediate need for Malaysia to take over the duty and responsibility of airspace control and management being undertaken by the Singapore air traffic control over parts of the peninsula.

"We are not thinking at this moment of acquiring our own radar equipment for that purpose," he told reporters after closing the Unit Trust Week 2002 here.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on a letter written by pilot Capt Adnan Rashid in the Letters to the Editor column of a daily today on the control and management of airspace undertaken by Singapore which monitors, controls and directs aircraft flying over parts of the peninsula, particularly over Johor and Pahang.

According to Capt Adnan, he was flying recently from Kertih to Johor Baharu, requiring the plane to fly over Pekan, Mersing, then Johor Baharu but to cut short the journey, he had requested from the Kuantan air traffic control for a direct route from Pakan to Johor Baharu.

He was then instructed to call the Singapore air traffic control for clearance.

"Even though I managed to get the clearance, the fact remained that I had to ask permission from an agency of another country to fly a direct route from one point to another point in my own country," Capt Adnan said.

The pilot said that 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 as to what level they can fly.

Dr Mahathir said that even though airspace control and management were undertaken by the Singapore air traffic control, Malaysia was being paid without having to invest in the acquisition of radar equipment.

"Even though Singapore is undertaking airspace control and management, airlines are still required to pay Malaysia. Without having to invest in acquiring equipment, we still enjoy returns," he said.

Meanwhile, when asked what action could be taken by against opposition leaders labelling government leaders as infidels, Dr Mahathir said that the government could initiate legal action but such actions must have the support of the people.

"The people shouldn't oppose such actions by creating chaos, staging protesta and such things," he said.

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