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PM: We have to get Brunei's consent to use smart cards

Manan Osman

MALAYSIA will get the consent of the Brunei government to introduce the use of smart cards for faster immigration clearance at Brunei checkpoints.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the card would make it more convenient, especially for Malaysians living in Brunei, to travel to Sarawak and Sabah.

Now, a person travelling to Kota Kinabalu from here, a distance of about 280km, needs to have his passport stamped eight times.

"This can be avoided if the use of such cards is accepted," he said during a dialogue with Malaysians in Brunei at the International Convention Centre here yesterday.

Earlier, during a Press conference to wind up his two-day working visit to Brunei for the annual consultation with the Sultan of Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, he said Malaysia was still discussing the matter.

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, arrived here on Friday.

On his meeting with the Sultan, he said both countries had agreed to resolve problems at their sea and land borders.

He said the issues were long outstanding and both parties wanted to resolve them.

He said they also discussed Asean, Asean+3 and relations among member countries. Brunei, he said, was committed to Asean+3 and supported Malaysia's proposal to set up its secretariat in Kuala Lumpur.

Meanwhile, he said Malaysia would handle the problem of Filipino illegal immigrants in Sabah in a fair and just manner by taking into consideration their background.

He said deportation was not easy as many of them had been living in Sabah for over 30 years and had school-going children.

"For these people, we will be more flexible to allow them to become Malaysian citizens while others who still have relatives in the Philippines may have to be sent back. Our action has the approval of the Philippine government."