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PM hopes Limbang issue can be resolved soon

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PENANG, Sat. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said he hoped the overlapping territorial claims to Limbang can be resolved between Malaysia and Brunei before he retires in October.

He said he was hopeful that Sultan Hassanah Bolkuah would consider a formula submitted by the Malaysian Government to Brunei several years ago.

"We discussed the territorial claims," he said of his private meeting with the Sultan here today.

"I hope the matter can be resolved before I retire in October."

The Sultan, who arrived yesterday, is on a three-day working visit to Penang.

Dr Mahathir and the Sultan met for about 70 minutes and discussed many bilateral issues.

The Prime Minister said he was confident relations between Malaysia and Brunei would grow stronger.

"We are old friends and there were many issues of mutual interest - on international affairs, on badminton."

Asked if there was any discussion to boost Brunei's investment in Malaysia, he said: "Not at the moment."

Asked if Malaysia was aware of attempts by Aceh separatists to seek protection in Malaysia, he said the country was not a place for them.

"We don't have any problem now, and Malaysia is not a place for them to seek protection."

Asked if any separatist would seek political asylum here, he said there was none.

On Malaysia's stance on the United Nations Security Council's decision to lift the sanctions against Iraq, Dr Mahathir said: "We have to see first what they meant by lifting the sanctions."

On the decision of the US administrator in Iraq to act swiftly in the country, with almost absolute power to run it, he said: "I don't know whether it is absolute or not. We have to watch, we have to see."