

## **Malaysia-Brunei Checkpoint Opening Hours Extended – Najib**

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**From Kamarul Ariffin Md Yassin**

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Aug 11 (Bernama) -- The opening period of the checkpoints at the Malaysia-Brunei Darussalam border will be extended by two more hours up to midnight, said Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

The checkpoints are now open from 6 am to 10 pm.

Najib said the agreement was reached at the talks between him and the Sultan of Brunei Darussalam, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, here Tuesday.

The period was extended to overcome the difficulty faced by the people who travel between the two countries, he told a news conference after concluding his visit to Brunei Darussalam for the Annual Leaders Consultation.

Najib did not say when the extended hours would be implemented.

He said the numerous checkpoints at the border of the two countries necessitated the stamping of the passport many times.

"This will also be reviewed to facilitate travel between Brunei Darussalam and Sabah and Sarawak," he said.

Earlier, the prime minister held four-eyed talks, for an hour and 15 minutes, with the sultan at their 19th Annual Leaders Consultation at Istana Nurul Iman.

The two leaders also witnessed the signing of several documents between the two countries.

Also present at the function were several Malaysian ministers, namely Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Adenan Satem and Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman.

Najib said Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah had agreed to hand over to the Malaysian Defence Ministry four used Black Hawk helicopters.

"This matter will be followed up by Datuk Seri Hishammuddin, the defence minister. (Malaysia-Brunei Darussalam) defence cooperation is at its best," he said.

Najib also said that in the defence area, Malaysia had established a "sea-based platform" in Sabah waters and that Brunei Darussalam, especially its armed forces, could set up a similar platform in that country's waters.

He said Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam also agreed that fishermen fishing in the traditional fishing areas would not be stopped from doing so even if they entered the waters of either country.

"They are not able to differentiate between the waters of Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam," he said.

He said the two countries would continue with efforts to demarcate the land boundary in areas it had yet to be finalised.

On the construction of the Pan Borneo Highway that is expected to be completed over the next six years, Najib said the Brunei Darussalam government would undertake to provide amenities for the comfort of the highway users in that country.

Najib said the cordial relations between the two countries would be used as the basis to move forward and improve what had been done as well as seek out new areas of cooperation that could jointly explored.

On ASEAN, Najib said the sultan had stated Brunei Darussalam's continued support for Malaysia as the ASEAN chair.

"On the complex and sensitive issue of overlapping claims in the South China Sea, the solidarity of the claimant countries especially from ASEAN is of utmost importance."

"It is through ASEAN solidarity that we can resolve this matter through negotiation and based on the principles adopted in the Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.

"It is hoped that subsequent negotiations will ensure that the South China Sea becomes a zone of peace and freedom that can contribute to the prosperity and stability of the region," he said.

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