

**Address Malaysia-Indonesia Border Issues With Socio-cultural Values – Rais  
Bernama  
Oct 13, 2015**

KOTA KINABALU, Oct 13 (Bernama) -- Malaysia-Indonesia border issues have to be addressed by taking into account socio-cultural values to ensure bilateral ties remain harmonious, said Socio-Cultural Advisor to the Malaysian Government Tan Sri Dr Rais Yatim.

He said the matter involved national issues associated with matters such as maritime laws, security, illegal trade, drug smuggling, human trafficking and manpower problems.

As such, Rais, who is also Malaysia-Indonesia People's Friendship Foundation (YIRMI) founder, said both countries should exercise diplomacy and be more proactive in addressing the issues.

"The border question should be addressed in a practical manner so that it is beneficial to both sides in the future," he said when opening a border dialogue organised by the Malaysia-Indonesia Journalists Solidarity Association (ISMAWI) here last night.

The two-day dialogue, with the theme "Harmonising the Border Community", involved the participation of Malaysian and Indonesian journalists. It is aimed at enhancing relations and understanding among journalists from both countries.

Also present were ISMAWI president Datuk Zulkefli Salleh, who is general manager of the Malaysian National News Agency (Bernama), president and managing director of ANTARA News Agency of Indonesia, Saiful Hadi, and Sabah Tourism Board chairman Datuk Joniston Bangkuai.

Rais said the formation of the ASEAN Community, based on the three pillars of an ASEAN Security Community, an ASEAN Economic Community, and an ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, showed how important it was to approach Malaysia-Indonesia border issues in the spirit of brotherhood.

Relations between Malaysia and Indonesia were seen as a 'test tube' for other ASEAN member countries to resolve their border issues, he added.

As such, he said, Malaysia and Indonesia should prove that they were capable of addressing border issues and be a model for the other ASEAN countries.

He said it was important for leaders from both countries to continue discussions to resolve the issues.

Meanwhile, Zulkefli, in his speech, said the presence of journalists at the dialogue could enhance familiarisation and understanding for greater cooperation.

He said Malaysian and Indonesian media practitioners played an important role in harmonising bilateral relations.

"Although our roots may be the same, we have to respect Malaysia and Indonesia as two sovereign countries in our dealings; there are limitations and there is the need to exercise diplomacy," he added.

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