



Dr Mahathir proudly showing off his new credit card-sized identity card. Picture by Zahari Zakaria

Value your citizenship, Dr M tells Malaysians

PETALING JAYA, Tues. — Many foreigners want to become Malaysian citizens because they believe that such citizenship offers significant privileges and benefits, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Therefore, the people should keep their identity cards safely because many foreigners wanted to obtain them by any means, the Prime Minister said when he launched the nation's new identity card which has extra security features at the National Registration Department headquarters.

He said the Malaysian citizenship was not given free of charge. The price for it was loyalty and responsibility to the country, he added.

However, some Malaysians who were too westernised in their outlook believed that citizenship had nothing to do with loyalty to the country, he said.

"These people do not mind being tools of foreigners with bad intentions towards us. They receive mon-

ey from foreigners to sabotage their own country."

Dr Mahathir said the new identity card was part of the first phase in the computerisation programme undertaken by the department.

The second phase, to begin next year, will involve a system to collect population data for a data base to enable the Government to effectively plan programmes and resolve national problems.

The data base can be used by all relevant Government departments. The system will also be the basis for the national population register which is important in public administration.

Dr Mahathir said there were numerous benefits from the new identity card project even though it cost \$64 million to implement.

He said the identity card system was essential as it helped differentiate between citizens and illegal immigrants.

Dr Mahathir said many foreigners were interested

in working here in view of the numerous job and business opportunities available.

"But migration from one nation to another has become a problem to many nations which are more developed than their neighbours. This problem must be arrested if the rights and interests of citizens are to be protected."

The new identity card had many security characteristics to prevent forgery, he said, adding that the public should not cause problems on the new ICs just because getting one may involve some expenses.

Asked to elaborate his earlier references to Malaysians who were used as tools by foreigners, Dr Mahathir said the Government was disappointed with them but it could not take back their citizenship unless they exercised the rights of citizenship of other countries such as taking part in their elections.

"I just hope that the Malaysian public will realise

that their citizenship is a privilege which many foreigners want."

Dr Mahathir, who is also Home Minister, received the first new identity card, followed by his Deputy, Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayub, and Parliamentary Secretary Ong Ka Ting.

Asked how serious the problem of disloyal Malaysians was, Dr Mahathir said it was not serious but it was a problem anyway.

He declined to identify who these people were.

Asked about the form of aid they were receiving from outsiders, he said: "We find they have much money and we are surprised how they had got it."

On the recent demonstration in the country by so-called foreign environmentalists against logging, he said they were hypocrites because they came from countries which talked often about the rule of law, yet had come to break the laws of this country.

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PM: Loyalty is the price of citizenship

PETALING JAYA, Tues. — Loyalty and responsibility to the country — that is the price of Malaysian citizenship, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said there were Malaysians who were so taken up by certain Western values that they thought that citizenship had nothing to do with loyalty to the country.

"They are prepared to be used by foreigners with bad intentions towards us. They receive money from foreigners to sabotage their own country," he said when launching the new credit-card sized identity card at the National Registration Department (NRD) here.

He said these people claimed they were championing human rights and the environment.

"Human rights and the environment are the responsibilities of Malaysian citizens. It is they who should determine what to safeguard," he said.

The Prime Minister said Malaysians should not take their citizenship for granted and that the privileges they enjoyed were not free.

Dr Mahathir later told newsmen that certain pressure groups were easily swayed by their western counterparts who were bent on discrediting Malaysia.

He said there were genuine pressure groups but cautioned that they should not allow themselves to be exploited by others.

He added the Government had found out that there were pressure groups that had a lot of money and was puzzled as to the source of their funds.

Asked about western groups such as the Greens environmental group, he said these people came from countries which claimed to uphold the rule of the law "but when they come here, they break the law."

Dr Mahathir labelled Green activists as hypo-



IT'S SMALL . . . a beaming Dr Mahathir showing his new IC to the media. The Prime Minister was the first to receive the new credit card-sized document.

crites who carried out their activities because the interests of their countries had been affected.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir criticised western countries which used their non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to "re-colonise" developing countries.

He said these activists still had a colonial mentality.

He cited the campaign against tropical timber and the Malaysian-made furniture in Europe as "economic arm-twisting."

He added the activists should hold more demonstrations in their own countries where threats to the environment were greater.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir reminded IC holders to take care of their identity cards as they were very

valuable personal effects.

He also said the new IC was the first step in the use of computers by the department.

Under the second phase of the programme which would begin next year, he said a database would be set up to collect the data of the population.

The data would facilitate national planning and the handling of public woes, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the entire computer project would cost \$64 million.

He said that the new ICs had many safety features to prevent forgeries.

NRD director-general Kamaruddin Nordin said the department would be improving its computer system and that enquiry services would be made accessible to other government agencies and departments after 1993.

The Prime Minister was the first person to be issued with a new IC.

Deputy Home Minister Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayob and ministry parliamentary secretary Ong Ka Ting were also issued with new ICs at the function.

The new IC bears the card number, name, birthdate and address of the holder.

300,000 who applied for new ICs to be notified soon

By Sharifah Fatimah

PETALING JAYA, Wed. — Some 300,000 Malaysians who applied for new identity cards since April last year will receive postcards from the National Registration Department over the next few days instructing them to collect their new ICs.

NRD director-general Encik Kamaruddin Nordin said today the postcards would inform the applicants when and from which NRD branch to obtain their new ICs.

The group is among one million people who now carry temporary identification documents since applying for the new ICs since April 1990.

The majority are 12-year-olds applying for their first identity card and those who applied to replace lost identity cards, Encik Kamaruddin said.

He said his department would take between two and three months to process new applications for the ICs if applicants ensured that all the necessary documents were submitted.

He saw no problems for Malaysians applying for the new IC as there were 183



ENCIK KAMARUDDIN
... 10,000-a-day target

NRD offices to receive the applications throughout the country.

"We will also send our mobile units to isolated areas in Sabah and Sarawak to enable the people there to renew their ICs," he added.

At present, only the NRD headquarters is equipped to produce the new security features IC after its State

and regional offices have received and processed the applications.

Encik Kamaruddin said it was too early to tell whether Malaysians preferred to apply for the new ICs now or wait till a later time.

"Our target is 10,000 applications a day throughout the country but if this target is not achieved, we might give more publicity to encourage the public to renew their ICs," he said.

Asked whether the NRD had plans to decentralise the production of the new ICs, Encik Kamaruddin said there was no such plan in the immediate future because production involved millions of ringgit.

He said, however, plans were under way to set up a computer link between NRD offices in Kota Kinabalu and Kuching with the NRD headquarters here by 1994, to ease the massive paperwork which was now sent by post from various towns in the two States.

Encik Kamaruddin expressed confidence that all 15 million Malaysians targeted under the IC-conversion programme would have changed to the new identity cards by 1996.

Avoid illegal activities, staff warned

PETALING JAYA, Wed. — National Registration Department personnel have been warned not to involve themselves in any illegal activities, such as forging the newly launched identity cards.

Deputy Home Minister Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayob, who issued the warning today, said that despite the new IC's security features it was still not impossible for forgery to happen if any of the department's officers or staff were involved.

"This has happened in the past and strict action, in the form of doing time at the Kamunting detention centre, has been taken on the culprits," he said when opening a NRD directors and senior officers conference here.

He was referring to an incident last year in which 12 NRD and Immigration Department officers were detained under the Internal Security Act for forging and selling international passports and identity cards.

"Just think of your family and your children's future should your involvement in such activities be detected," he said.

Datuk Megat Junid also advised NRD officers and staff to be always on guard when processing the new identity cards.

"There are many unscrupulous people out there who are willing to do anything to



DATUK MEGAT JUNID
... be on guard

get hold of the new ICs," he said.

To avoid being fooled, he urged NRD officers to be firm but efficient so that innocent members of the public did not face problems in obtaining the new ICs.

"The 1990s is the dawning of a new era for the NRD as the department takes another step forward in modernising its management through the use of computers to process identity cards and to store records."

He also called on the directors and officers to be sensitive to problems faced in every State in the IC conversion process, which is targetted to take place until 1996.

No long queues at Registration Department

PETALING JAYA, Wed. — The launching of the new identity card by the Prime Minister yesterday has not caused anticipated long queues at the National Registration Department headquarters here.

Instead, a check by the *New Straits Times* early this morning showed a smaller-than-usual crowd waiting to be served at the counters.

It was learnt that most of those who made inquiries on how to apply for the new ICs were parents, who, while accompanying their 12-year-old children, took advantage of their visit to get hold of the application forms.

One of them was Mrs E.K. Ooi from Bangsar who was at the NRD office in the hope that she would be able to collect her daughter's IC.

"Since I'm already here I might as well take an application form for myself and get first-hand information on what I need to prepare when I come back to submit my application," she said.

Mrs Ooi, who works as a nurse, welcomed the new identity card because, she said, it was "practical" and just the right size to fit into wallets.

Another parent, Mr P. Kandiah, 52, also took an application form, saying he was applying for the new IC now because the Govern-



MRS OOI

...practical

ment wanted Malaysians to do so.

"The 1996 grace period doesn't matter to me as long as I have no problems in submitting my application," said Mr Kandiah, who was at the NRD office to accompany his daughter Santhi, who just celebrated her 12th birthday on July 24.

"The earlier, the better" was the reason for Encik Mukhtar Ahmad's presence at the NRD headquarters.

"This will be my fourth IC but I will always remember my very first IC which was issued in 1954 and bore the name of the district where it was issued in front of the number," said the 49-year-old father.

20,000 to get new-look IC today



ALL SMILES: Registration staff, from left, Maggie Chou, Meenabal Balakrishnan and Rokiah Kamaruddin showing off the new credit card size ICs

SOME 20,000 Malaysians throughout the country will receive the new credit-card size identity card today — the first of an estimated one million who have applied for it since April last year.

"There are 80,000 cards printed and ready for issue now," said National Registration Department deputy director for the IC section Mohamed Kamal Jasit.

"The biggest batch of applications is from those who have lost their cards."

The counter at its headquarters in Petaling Jaya can process 500 applications a day.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad launched the new card and was later presented with the first one from NRD Director-General Kamaruddin Nordin.

Those who also received the new cards were Deputy Home Affairs Minister Da-

tuk Megat Junid Megat Ayub and Parliamentary Secretary Ong Ka Ting.

Measuring 86mm by 54mm, the new IC number will carry the year, month and date of birth of the holder. The State and district in which the card is issued will also be embossed.

The old IC number is printed at the bottom right-hand corner of the card.

The card has only basic information. But Encik Mohamed Kamal said detailed information is required on the application form. This will be fed into the computer and be a national information database.

The application form requires information like the father and mother's age when the child was born and the applicants' occupations at that time.

De La Rue Services Malaysia is providing the information technology and

computer know-how for the credit-card identity card.

Malaysia is the only country which has this sophisticated \$60 million system and the consultants from this British-based company will be in Malaysia for the next two years to oversee the project.

De La Rue received the contract for the project in December 1988 and it became effective in April last year.

The new identity cards were to have been launched in June last year but had to be postponed because of a printing error.

The Malaysian flag inscribed on several samples submitted by the company were found to have one stripe less than the actual 14.

Malaysians have until 1996 to get their new cards. The cards can be issued within two to three months of application.