

Ports working to reduce delays: PM

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PORT KLANG, Sun. — All Malaysian ports are reviewing procedures and documentation for faster handling of cargo, the Prime Minister said today.

~~Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad~~ said the Penang Port Commission (PPC) and the Klang Port Authority (KPA) had already revised cargo handling procedures and reduced documentation.

He said the other ports were in the process of conducting similar reviews and "to them, the Government wants the new simplified procedures and documents to be introduced very soon".

"A trade facilitation committee has been set up under the Trade and Industry Ministry to

co-ordinate and oversee this review as it also involved other departments like the Customs and Immigration," he said.

He was speaking at the KPA Silver Jubilee celebrations and Klang Port Open Day here.

Red tape

Dr Mahathir said fewer delays in cargo handling would encourage importers, exporters and traders to use Malaysian ports rather than those in third countries.

He said these "unnecessary and cumbersome" procedures and documents had led to goods being imported through ports in third countries.

This red tape had also

caused delays in clearing goods at the ports. This in turn led to delays in distribution of goods to other parts of the country.

The Prime Minister reiterated that all facilities at the Klang port would be privatised.

He gave an assurance that both the Government and the private sector would benefit from this and reminded all quarters to avoid taking actions which would affect privatisation efforts.

"If the privatisation of Klang port fails, everyone and not just the Government would be losers.

"It will be a shame to see our goods go through foreign ports

for want of efficient port services."

He called on port authorities to improve their management skills and to identify highly-qualified port personnel with a view to grooming them to replace expatriates.

Solutions

A task force has been set up to study congestion at the Klang port and to recommend short and long term solutions.

He said the Cabinet had recently allowed haulage companies to transport containers anywhere in the country.

In the past, each company had been restricted to specific zones.