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Tajol-Amnesty

AMNESTY FOR ILLEGALS EXTENDED 15 DAYS

MELAKA, Oct 31 (Bernama) -- The amnesty period for illegal immigrants which is to end today has been extended until November 15 to allow those stranded here to leave the country.

Deputy Home Minister Datuk Tajol Rosli Ghazali said the 15-day extension was given on humanitarian grounds and due to the congestion at several exit points.

He advised illegal immigrants still in the country not to wait until the last minute to return to their country of origin.

Speaking to reporters here tonight after he and Immigration Department Director-General Datuk Aseh Che Mat surveyed the congestion at Melaka Port, Tajol Rosli said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who had earlier agreed to extend the amnesty period, had directed that a survey be conducted on the congestion which occurred in the past few days.

The two-month amnesty period, starting August 31, is supposed to end tonight.

He said the 15-day extension would be final and that there would be no more extension.

Tajol Rosli said the authorities were in fact ready to conduct operations against illegal immigrants when the amnesty period ended today.

Since August 31 until last night, a total of 141,806 illegal immigrants had returned to their country of origin.

Of the number, 123,548 were from Indonesia, 8,937 from Bangladesh, 3,191 from India, 2,662 from the Philippines and 1,049 from Myanmar.

He said the amnesty programme had been a success since it was initially estimated that only about 50,000 illegals immigrants would return to their country of origin.

A big number of the illegal immigrants had returned to their country of origin only in the last few days resulting in the congestion at several exit points, especially in Melaka, Port Klang and the Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

He said the survey showed that air and ferry tickets out from several of the exit points had been sold out and that only tickets from the next two weeks were available.

Tajol Rosli said once the extension period ended, the authorities would take action against the remaining illegal immigrants and any foreign worker, employer or member of the public who commit Immigration offences would be prosecuted.

--BERNAMA

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