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Ling: No plans to move CIQ checkpoint

IPOH, Thurs. - Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said today that Malaysia has no plans to move its Customs, Immigration and Quarantine checkpoint from Tanjong Pagar in Singapore.

"The land there was given to us for 999 years. It is an inter-government agreement and you don't break it unless there is mutual agreement," he said.

Dr Ling said this after opening the Wooley's Food Centre. He was also here to attend Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's meet-the-people session.

Asked if Singapore's moving of its CIQ checkpoint from Tanjong Pagar was to pave the way for it to obtain the land cheaply from Malaysia, he said he did not want to read any bad intentions into the move.

"They have done what they have done and we are doing what we are doing," he added.

As for the criticisms levelled at Singapore as a result of its actions, Dr Ling would only say:

"When the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang opened with its hitches, the Singapore Press went to town with the stories.

"We tolerated it and took it in the right spirit that it was news, although it wasn't in our best interest."

In Jeli, the dispute over Tanjong Pagar has not affected business relations between the two countries, Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said today.

He said relations between entrepreneurs in Malaysia and Singapore were "still normal".

Mustapa, who is the chairman of the Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore Regional Entrepreneurs Council, said the problems would, however, affect diplomatic ties.

"Being a neighbour and in the interest of both countries, Singapore should have respect for Malaysia."

Speaking after a meeting with heads of department in the Jeli parliamentary constituency at the Umno complex in Bukit Nangka, he expressed regret over Singapore's attitude.

"It shows that there is no sincerity on the part of Singapore in solving problems with Malaysia nor a willingness to be a good neighbour.

"For as long as Singapore refuses to change its attitude towards Malaysia, there will always be problems," he added.

In Kuala Lumpur, the 4B Youth Movement president, Datuk Wira Ali Rustam, will personally send a protest letter to the Singapore High Commission this evening.

The protest letter states that Singapore harbours a malicious intent against Malaysia, and plans to move the Malaysian CIQ out of the republic for good.

Ali said Singapore should stop being arrogant, and be thankful to Malaysia for contributing to its well-being.

"It was Malaysia that won independence for Singapore and now we are supplying water to them."

He added that it was Singapore that set off the dispute and it was now up to the republic to make amends.

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