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CIQ posts at two spots `won't deter Singaporean visitors'

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The arrangement where Malaysia's Customs, Immigration and Quarantine checkpoint operates at Tanjong Pagar and Singapore's at Woodlands will not deter Singaporeans from using KTM Bhd's services.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today this was because KTMB provided "efficient and beneficial services".

Abdullah said this after meetings between Laotian and Malaysian delegations at the Prime Minister's Department. Visiting Laotian Prime Minister Sisavath Keobounphanh led his delegation while Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir headed the Malaysian side.

Abdullah said there was no reason for Singaporeans to stop using KTMB's services.

"I don't think the present arrangement of having the Malaysian Customs, Immigration and Quarantine facilities in Tanjong Pagar and theirs in Woodlands will create difficulties or deter Singaporeans from using the railway services," he said.

Abdullah's remarks came a day after Singapore's MP for Boon Lay, Goh Chee Wee advised Singaporeans not to use KTMB's services "as they would face bigger problems" when they entered Malaysia.

He said as Malaysian Immigration officials in Tanjong Pagar did not stamp passports, Singaporeans who entered Malaysia could be considered illegal immigrants.

Meanwhile, in Johor Baru, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman, said both Malaysia and Singapore should look for a solution to the Tanjong Pagar issue without acting emotionally.

He said they should practise moderation and be level-headed.

There are a lot of ways to solve the problem," he told reporters after opening a new counter at Tabung Haji.

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