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KTMB has contingency plans, says Ling

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - KTM Bhd has devised contingency plans to overcome the issue of relocating the Customs, Immigration and Quarantine checkpoint from Tanjong Pagar to Woodlands, Singapore.

"However what the contingency plans are will only be known tomorrow," Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said today.

He said: "All the senior staff of KTMB have been alerted. They have their plans ...I have discussed with them. They will be down there (Singapore)."

He was speaking to reporters after attending Kolej Tunku Abdul Rahman's convocation ceremony where 2,465 students received their scrolls.

Tomorrow, the republic will move its CIQ checkpoint from the Tanjong Pagar railway station in central Singapore to Woodlands which is close to the Malaysian border.

But on Monday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysia would not move its checkpoint to Woodlands.

Singapore said yesterday that talks to resolve the row over railway travel procedures had broken down and travellers would face difficulties if Malaysia did not move its checkpoint.

Dr Ling said Singapore's stand would cause a lot of inconvenience to travellers especially those from the republic.

"This is especially so during the holiday season when many Singaporean children take the trains. I have been informed that tickets are sold out, mostly bought by them."

Asked whether the contingency plans included stopping KTMB's service at Johor Baru, he said: "No comment right now."

"I believe that both (Malaysian and Singaporean) Foreign Ministers are discussing the matter and it is up to them.

"I hope good sense will prevail... it is an international affair. This is not purely a railway issue but a bilateral matter."

Meanwhile in Johor Baru, KTMB is taking the necessary steps to ensure "smooth and uninterrupted" passenger train services to Singapore tomorrow.

KTMB public relations manager Azizah Ujang said additional manpower would be stationed at both the Johor Baru and Tanjong Pagar stations to assist passengers.

"Our primary concern is the comfort of passengers. We will do everything possible to ensure they suffer no inconveniences," she said after a meeting of senior officials of KTMB, Immigration and Customs at KTMB's Johor Baru headquarters today.

Azizah said KTMB would ensure train services between Malaysia and Singapore proceeded smoothly.

She said the meeting was held to co-ordinate the efforts of the authorities in coping with the transfer of CIQ facilities in Singapore.

"KTMB will abide by whatever decisions taken by the Malaysian Government in its talks with Singapore on the status of the Tanjong Pagar station."

She also said the information counters at the Johor Baru and Tanjong Pagar stations would look into passengers' complaints and requests.

She said KTMB had received many enquiries from members of the public on tomorrow's train services.

Currently, four express train services leave Tanjong Pagar daily, two of which head for Kuala Lumpur, while one each go to Butterworth and Tumpat.

There are two mail train services from Tanjong Pagar to Gua Musang and

Gemas and four daily shuttle services to Johor Baru.

The public can call KTMB at tel: 03-2239820 or 2239769 to enquire about the Malaysia-Singapore train services.

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