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Malaysia-CIQ

MALAYSIA TO ANNOUNCE DETAILS ON TANJUNG PAGAR DISPUTE WITH SINGAPORE

KUALA LUMPUR, July 30 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will announce tomorrow details on the deadlock in a dispute with Singapore over the Malaysian immigration checkpoint at the Tanjung Pagar railway station in Singapore, senior officials said today.

Foreign Ministry Secretary-General Datuk Abdul Kadir Mohamad will reveal the details behind Malaysia's decision to maintain the checkpoint at the Tanjung Pagar railway station that is owned by KTM Berhad.

Abdul Kadir is scheduled to hold a news briefing in the afternoon. Before this, he was attending the Asean Ministerial Meeting (AMM) which ended in Manila yesterday.

"A statement will be issued during the briefing," said an official.

In a statement today, Singapore said talks had broken down and warned that Malaysian immigration officers would be acting without legal authority in Tanjung Pagar and contrary to immigration clearance sequence after Singapore shifts its Customs, Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) facilities from Tanjung Pagar to Woodlands on Saturday.

Its Home Affairs Ministry said in a statement that Singapore had informed the Malaysian government that rail passengers will face "difficulties and inconvenience" if Malaysian immigration insists on executing its duties in Tanjung Pagar after tomorrow.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said on Monday that Malaysia will not shift its CIQ facilities from Tanjung Pagar after the Foreign Ministry rejected a Singapore statement that both sides had agreed to interim arrangements.

The Foreign Ministry said that the Singapore statement contained factual inaccuracies and that Malaysia had requested for space inside the Woodlands Train Checkpoint (WTCP) and not on the passenger platform as stated by Singapore.

Officials from both sides had a series of meetings in the past fortnight following Singapore's announcement to move its CIQ from Tanjung Pagar, south of the republic, to Woodlands that is linked by a causeway to Malaysia, on Aug 1.

The matter was also taken up by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his Singapore counterpart S.Jayakumar during the AMM.

The stalemate will affect train passengers travelling from Singapore via Tanjung Pagar to Malaysia as they are required to be cleared for exit by Singapore first before the Malaysian authorities grant them entry.

Those going to Singapore will not be affected as they will be cleared by Malaysian immigration in Johor Baharu and Singapore immigration in Woodlands.

-- BERNAMA

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