

29/07/1998

Decision to maintain CIQ operations hailed

Michelle Sheares

DEPUTY Transport Minister Datuk Wira Mohd Ali Rustam said yesterday he fully supports Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's decision for Malaysia to maintain Customs, Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) operations at its present premises in Tanjung Pagar in Singapore.

"That land (at the Tanjung Pagar railway station) belongs to Malaysia," he told reporters yesterday after launching a Malaysia transportation homepage in Kuala Lumpur.

Mohd Ali said Singapore has its own motives for moving its CIQ to Woodlands. "Eventually, they will chase us out of the land which is ours," he said, adding that Singapore must recognise and respect that the land in Tanjung Pagar belongs to Malaysia.

Mohd Ali added that he was made to understand that Singapore wanted to place Malaysian immigration officials on the train platform instead of giving them a proper place or office.

"Who do they think we Malaysians are? They are trying to humiliate us by making our officials stamp passports while on the platform. This is very unneighbourly on their (Singapore's) part."

It had been reported on Saturday that Malaysia will maintain its CIQ operations in Tanjung Pagar railway station after August 1 when Singapore moves its CIQ to Woodlands.

Mohd Ali also said the Singapore media and its leaders are envious of Malaysia's success.

"They keep up the negative reports on KL International Airport (KLIA). They forget that when their Changi Airport opened, they lost several thousands of bags," he said.

"Yet, when we are a little slow, they keep on harping that we are not efficient and have no standard. Time and time again we are criticised.

(END)