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Budget-Customs/BM

CUSTOMS PROCEDURES TO BE SIMPLIFIED FOR INVESTORS' BENEFIT

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 20 (Bernama) -- The government plans to simplify and standardise prevailing customs procedures and regulations to ensure investors get the best treatment in the handling of import and export of goods.

"Among the steps to be taken are that movement of taxable goods between free zones or for export will be exempted from bank guarantee, and movement of taxable goods will require only a single form," Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said when tabling the 2003 Budget in the Dewan Rakyat today.

To save time and cost, the customs department would not reexamine goods that have been inspected by other agencies such as the Health Ministry and Agriculture Ministry, he said.

To prevent the smuggling of cigarettes, the government will introduce special stickers or codes to be affixed on each packet of cigarettes to indicate that tax has been paid.

Similarly, the government would also introduce stickers on other items such as liquor and medicines, not only to ensure taxes have been paid but also to protect customers from purchasing counterfeit goods, he said.

Dr Mahathir also said all civil servants would be reorientated and inculcated with excellent work culture which emphasises efficiency, discipline, trustworthiness and commitment as well as a pro-business attitude in implementing government policies.

"An efficient, fast and client-friendly delivery system of the civil service ensures the smooth and effective implementation of national development policies and strategies," he said.

"In this regard, the civil service must reduce bureaucracy and review all regulations and procedures to expedite dealings with the public.

"This will facilitate businessmen in their dealings with the government and reduce the cost of doing business, thereby enhancing the nation's competitiveness."

Dr Mahathir said as the government was concerned with the welfare of civil servants and sensitive to their problems, it recently agreed to implement the Sistem Saraan Malaysia (SSM) although it would involve an additional expenditure of more than RM300 million.

The Prime Minister said the government was confident that its implementation would benefit civil servants and the nation.

SSM was based on increased competency and in-depth knowledge of a civil servant, he said.

To enable civil servants to carry out their duties effectively, the government will ensure they remain healthy and productive.

"Under the current regulations, officers in the management and professional category, 40 years and above are encouraged to undergo medical examinations from time to time. This facility is now extended to all civil servants in the support group," Dr Mahathir said.

He said the government had developed the Putrajaya Administration Centre to be the centre of excellence in public administration.

-- BERNAMA

AZH AHH YBY