

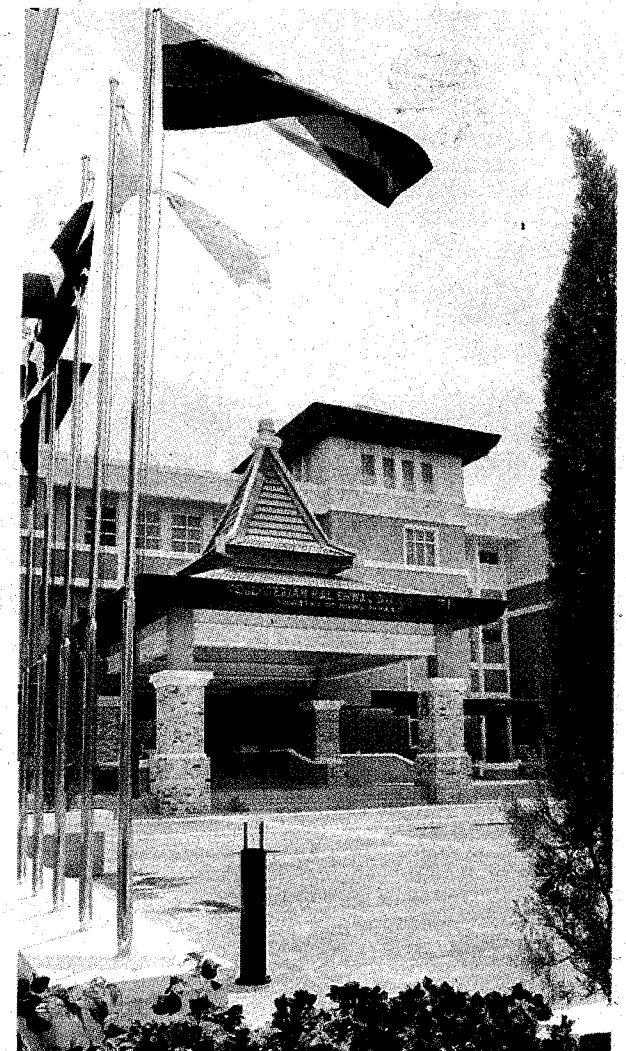
# ALL UNDER ONE ROOF

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## The Home Affairs Ministry complex a boost for tourism



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (centre) launching the Ministry of Home Affairs office in Ayer Keroh, Malacca recently. Looking on are Home Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Radzi Sheikh Ahmad (left), Home Affairs Ministry secretary-general Tan Sri Aseh Che Mat and Malacca Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam (right).



The RM59mil Home Affairs Ministry complex in Ayer Keroh houses the Immigration Department, National Registration Department (NRD), Registry of Societies, Office of the People's Volunteer Corps (Rela), Division of Film Control, Department of Civil Defence and National Anti-Drug Agency.

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**MALACCA:** With the opening of the Home Affairs Ministry complex in Ayer Keroh here, both the locals and tourists can expect express quality service from all of the seven departments housed under one roof.

The complex, built at a cost of RM59mil had started operations since March last year and houses the Immigration Department, National Registration Department (NRD), Registry of Societies, Office of the People's Volunteer Corps (Rela), Division of Film Control, Department of Civil Defence and National Anti-Drug Agency.

Josephine Lai, 35, a marketing executive said she was very impressed with the quality and friendly service of the NRD officers when she decided to pop in on March 18.

"I just dropped by to make some enquiries about renewing my MyKad and how to add on certain features and despite having to work on a weekend, the officers on duty were smiling and patiently explained everything to me," said Lai. Her husband, manager Andrew Chong, 40,

said the new facility had really made things convenient for them as they had fixed office hours.

"Now that it is open during the weekends, we will have no problem getting all these things done, and I hope that the ministry will extend the working hours on weekends so that it is even more convenient," said Chong.

Jayamuthu Segaranathan, 45, said he was very pleased with the new facility because it was sophisticated, efficient and up to international standards.

The Mathematics teacher added he was confident that the new facility could help boost tourism, both domestic and foreign, in the state.

Elizabeth Charles, a 30-year-old expatriate said that as a foreigner in Malacca, she felt that the new facility would definitely attract more tourists, especially those who needed to make enquiries about their travel documents.

"This is even more crucial to have the office opened during weekends as most tourists drop by to participate and witness the weekend happenings here.

"It is most apt and a good move by the government," said Charles.

At the NRD, it would only take 20 minutes to apply for or replace a MyKad while at the

Immigration department, applications to renew or for a new passport would be processed by the end of two hours.

At present, those who renew or apply for a MyKad have to wait one day if they go to the NRD headquarters in Putrajaya.

The MyKad has eight features - identity card, driving licence, passport particulars, health information, Touch 'n Go, MEPS cash, ATM and public key infrastructure for access to government services.

Launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi on March 13, both departments have also started to open their doors to the public on weekends from 8am to 12.45pm to facilitate the tourism industry in the state.

This new facility, Home Affairs Ministry secretary-general Tan Sri Aseh Che Mat said, would be able to attract domestic tourists to travel to the state over weekends to do MyKad transactions.

Foreign tourists on the other hand, would have no problem sorting out visa or passport matters.

"If the response is overwhelming, the services at both departments in the pioneering pro-

gramme can be extended till late afternoon," he said recently.

The integrated complex, which has a built-up area of more than 31,000 square metres, is the third of its kind after those in Kuantan and Ipoh.

Besides the government departments, it also boasts of facilities such as an auditorium, a conference hall, a multipurpose hall, three badminton courts, a recreation pool, a parade ground and residential quarters.

This pilot project is expected to be implemented in all Home Affairs offices nationwide in the next five years.

During the launching, Home Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Radzi Sheikh Ahmad said the ministry had always emphasised on physical facilities and infrastructure.

"The ministry also continues to strive to improve delivery system and reduce bureaucracy to provide the best service for the public," he said.

The Home Affairs complex also provides services for foreign workers, maids, expatriates and international students to renew their i-Kad; an immigration identity card with 17 safety features to make it duplicate-proof.