

CUSTOMS EXCEEDS 2021 TARGET WITH RM42.5B

Dept will continue to be economic frontliners who will boost GDP growth, says Ismail Sabri

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THE Customs Department collected RM42.5 billion in revenue for the year 2021, surpassing its target of RM40 billion, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said.

Apart from the revenue collection, the department was also successful in crippling international drug trafficking cartels following the seizure of 16 tonnes of drugs worth RM5.2 billion in March, said Ismail Sabri.

"With such a performance, I believe the Customs Department will continue to be successful as economic frontliners who can drive quality and positive growth for the nation's gross domestic product, thus nurturing the people's prosperity."

He said this after officiating at the 40th World Customs Day at the Customs Department headquarters here yesterday.

Present were World Customs Organisation (WCO) secretary-general Kunio Mikuriya, Customs

Department director-general Datuk Seri Abdul Latif Abdul Kadir as well as Finance Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz and his deputies, Datuk Mohd Shahar Abdullah and Yamani Hafez Musa.

Ismail Sabri said this year's theme for International Customs Day, "Scaling up Customs Digital Transformation by Embracing a Data Culture and Building a Data Ecosystem", was relevant due to the need to modernise the department's operations systems.

Through this, he said, the country would be able to create a conducive environment for local and international businesses, including increasing their confidence to make Malaysia a destination for them to investment in.

He said WCO's initiatives through the Customs Department in introducing this year's theme was in line with the government's hope of increasing Malaysia's rank in the "Ease of Doing Business" category, which could attract foreign investments.

"The development of digital technology, particularly in the data and information sharing sector, is an important platform and has been applied to the public services, especially in facing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"I believe that the injection of digital transformation through the empowerment of culture and data ecosystem in the services and operations of the Customs

Department can strengthen its performance, thus shaping Malaysia as a competitive and ambitious country.

"The government is also striving to help the department combat smuggling and facilitate trade towards increasing revenue collection and strengthening border control.

"This commitment can be seen through the addition of patrol boats and scanners as the department's new assets to strengthen border sovereignty and launch cross-border trade activities."

Meanwhile, Tengku Zafrul, in his speech, said the department's achievements had contributed significantly to the government's Penjana Plan, including the granting of penalty remission, sales tax exemption, service tax, import tax and export duty.

"In addition, following the announcement of the 2022 Budget, the department has been mandated to implement the VA Programme, one of the government's efforts in tax reform to encourage taxpayers to come forward voluntarily and report taxes properly.

"Starting from early this year to Sept 30, 2022, the department needs to mobilise its machinery to ensure the collection target for this programme can be achieved, which is between RM1 billion and RM2 billion.

"I am confident that the department can achieve this target, which will be channelled to the people."