

## GRAFT CLAIM

# ANWAR: SITUATION AT KLIA UNDER CONTROL

PM says issues relating to a small group of Immigration personnel will be addressed

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**P**RIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim acknowledged that there are issues related to the Immigration Department that need addressing, following a cabinet minister's claims of a "culture of corruption" at the department at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA).

He said while the majority of Immigration personnel were doing a good job, a small group was responsible for the problems.

He yesterday paid a surprise visit to inspect the Customs and Immigration operations at the airport prior to welcoming home Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tunku Hajah Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah from Saudi Arabia following their haj pilgrimage.

It is understood that Anwar's visit was done without the presence of other dignitaries or ministers, except for Immigration and Customs officers.

Anwar said, in general, the situation at the airport was under control.

"There are some problems that

need to be addressed, but I wish to assure you that a thorough investigation will be carried out.

"In general, the majority of Immigration officers are carrying out their duties well.

"There are some problems that we will address. If there is any mistake, action will be taken.

"I will study the action to be taken. For now, (the) Immigration (Department) has responded positively.

"However, we are identifying a small group who seems unable to bring about change, and is facing a number of accusations.

"An investigation will be carried out. Preliminary discussions will be held at the cabinet level on Wednesday."

Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing dropped a bombshell on Friday by claiming that a "culture of corruption" was prevalent among some Immigration officers handling the arrival of foreign tourists at KLIA.

His claims came about after he was accused of overstepping his boundaries when he recently went to the KLIA arrival hall, allegedly to resolve the detention of a female tourist from China.

Tiong, who is Bintulu member of parliament, said he was there to view the situation at the airport following claims of rampant corruption involving Immigration officers.

He said he was told by the tourist that she was asked by a "three-star" ranking officer to pay RM3,000 to facilitate her immediate release, another RM3,000 for her next re-entry into Malaysia and RM12,000 for visa-processing fees.

He urged the Home Ministry and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) to investigate the matter.

However, the Immigration Services Union of Peninsular Malaysia lambasted Tiong on Saturday by demanding that he be "more respectful of the law" and not interfere with civil servants' duties.

They said his claims of corruption were to divert attention from his interference in Immigration operations.

The Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Services called for a full investigation into Tiong for allegedly breaching security protocols at the airport.

Transport Minister Anthony Loke, however, dismissed claims of any security protocol breach, saying ministers were allowed to enter such areas even if they were not boarding a flight.

Loke said Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd had verified that Tiong had been accompanied by auxiliary police officers and security personnel from the company when he entered and exited KLIA.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said on Saturday that he was awaiting a full report on the incident.

On the same day, MACC Chief Commissioner Tan Sri Azam Baki said it would investigate the allegations and gather information from the parties involved.

*Page.1 pic: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim inspecting the Customs and Immigration operations at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport yesterday.*