

Spotlight now on NRD

PM reveals alleged corruption in another key govt agency

PUTRAJAYA: First, there were claims by a minister about corruption in the Immigration Department at arrival points in the country.

Now, the Prime Minister himself says he has received information on alleged corruption in yet another important government agency, the National Registration Department.

While investigations are underway over the claims against the Immigration Department, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has added urgency to the matter, saying he was informed of payment being asked for documents from the NRD, including for citizenship.

"I want to share this information. Yesterday, I received information about a matter that may still be under investigation.

"We want to facilitate those eligible to obtain status, including citizenship.

"But to get the certificate, it is said payments were imposed," he told the Prime Minister's Department's monthly assembly.

Anwar said although the number of those involved in such practices in both departments were small, it should not be tolerated.

The Star has reached out to the NRD and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission but has yet to get any response.

The MACC, however, is already



Close collaboration: Anwar (centre) mingling with civil servants from the Prime Minister's Department after their monthly meeting in Dewan De'Seri Endon in Putrajaya. - Bernama

investigating allegations of corruption involving the Immigration Department.

Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing was reported to have said that he had to step in to help an employee of a China-based media company after Immigration officers held her up at KLIA on her arrival from Shenzhen on June 29.

The woman alleged that she was denied entry although her travel documents were in order. She claimed she was asked to pay several thousand ringgit if she wanted to be allowed in.

Anwar said the public should not judge the entire civil service due to the actions of a few but acknowledged that action must be taken against the bad apples.

"Immediate action must be taken against the small group who remain comfortable and set

in the old ways," he told the monthly assembly. He did not spell out what he meant by "old practices and systems."

"We must not let a few rotten apples spoil others. There are many civil servants who have integrity," he said.

The Prime Minister made a surprise visit to the KLIA on Sunday and described the incident involving the Chinese tourist as a "minor storm". He said his visit was to defend the integrity and authority of the Immigration Department.

Meanwhile, the Home Ministry, which oversees both the Immigration Department and NRD, said it would fully cooperate in the MACC investigations.

Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said the ministry had no objection to the investigation.

Commenting on the KLIA inci-

dent, Saifuddin said the inspection of visitors into the country by Immigration officers was a common practice. He said there were cases of visitors given the "Not To Land" notice, but the number was very small.

"For example, for visitors from China, an average of only between 50 and 60 people are issued the NTL.

There are also people from other countries, but the number is very small," he told reporters after launching the national-level People's Volunteer Corps (Rela) 51st anniversary celebration at its northern region training centre in Bukit Selambau in Kedah.