

PM's KLIA visit aimed at raising immigration integrity

PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said his surprise visit to the KL International Airport (KLIA) on Sunday was aimed at raising the credibility and integrity of the Immigration Department, which is being publicly criticised.

Speaking at the Prime Minister's Department's monthly assembly here yesterday, Anwar said one bad apple spoils the whole barrel.

"It is not right for us to give the general impression and perception (because of one bad apple) that the Immigration Department is flawed."

The premier was at KLIA for about 30 minutes, and from the visit he found the management and operation of the Customs Department and the Immigration Department were under control.

> Management and operation of govt departments under control, says Anwar

He said appropriate action would be taken to improve the situation and resolve any problems.

Anwar said he found that only one of the seven luggage scanners operated by the Customs Department was in operation and wanted the situation rectified immediately.

"I am also the finance minister, and the Customs Department is under my responsibility. Does it need to wait for the minister to come to find out that the machines are damaged?"

"If the cost is only a few million, we can approve it

immediately and I believe that neither the KPPA (Director-General of Public Services Datuk Dr Zulkapli Mohamad) nor the MACC (Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission) will investigate (the immediate approval) because the situation is urgent."

He emphasised the need for top officers to go down and see the department's operations for themselves and not make assumptions that everything is operating well.

"The aim is to improve, not to find fault or criticise."

Meanwhile, Deputy Finance Minister I Datuk Seri Ahmad

Maslan said the repair of six faulty Customs Department scanners at KLIA began yesterday.

He said the repairs would cost more than RM1 million and that the ministry had so far not faced any obstacles in approving repairs submitted by any government agency or department.

"The allocations (for machine repairs) that we give to ministries to repair their machines and other equipment are included in the budget. It's just that sometimes there are unforeseen things that need a longer process (for approval)."

Ahmad was speaking after chairing the Royal Malaysian Customs Academy integrity course with the World Customs Organisation and the Regional Office for Capacity Building in Bukit Baru yesterday.

In the meantime, Customs Department Director-General Datuk Zazuli Johan said the department does not solely rely on scanners as there are several other ways to ensure security at the country's key entry points.

He said one of the methods is the on-the-spot observation by immigration officers, Bernama reported.

"Last month, for example, we even detected drugs. That means we can still do our job without the scanners."

In another development, Anwar said he received information that there were individuals eligible for citizenship being asked to pay a sum of money for the citizenship certificate and believed that the matter was being investigated.

"There has to be strong and decisive action, otherwise it will hurt the image of the (National Registration Department) administration."

He also expressed the need for all weaknesses to be rectified so that they would not affect the image of the department, civil servants and the country.



Ahmad greeting participants of the integrity course in Malacca yesterday. - **BERNAMAPIC**