

'National security will not be compromised'

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has given an assurance that national security will not be affected following the government's recent announcement regarding visa exemption for visitors from several countries.

Anwar, who is also the finance minister, said security agencies have been asked to strengthen screening so that visa exemption facilities do not affect national security.

"There are honourable members who may feel concerned because security issues have been raised, so relevant agencies have been asked to strengthen the screening," he said when tabling the Supply Bill 2024 for the second reading in the Dewan Negara yesterday.

On Nov 26, Anwar announced that the government has granted a 30-day visa exemption for Chinese

> Screening of travellers to be enhanced as safeguard for visa exemption move, says Anwar

and Indian nationals to Malaysia from Dec 1, in the spirit of the strategic partnership of Malaysia-China bilateral relations, which will span 50 years next year.

He said it is an additional facility to the existing visa exemptions enjoyed by citizens from Gulf states and other West Asian countries, Bernama reported.

On Monday, Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said the Immigration Department will set up a special task force to monitor the departure of tourists from China and India, at the end of the 30-day permissible stay period in Malaysia.

those with criminal records and terror risks," he said in a statement.

The prime minister has also asked the top management of the armed forces to manage its assets without interference from outside parties, including the government, as it is often plagued by procurement-related problems.

He said this means the armed forces are fully responsible for any technical or implementation problem, while the government, particularly the Finance Ministry, will only negotiate in terms of equipment asset costs.

"It's better that we should negotiate directly with relevant governments. We have already started with Turkiye, South Korea and Italy. Otherwise, billions of ringgit will flow out of control. We cannot afford to spend tens of billions of ringgit and see very poor assets, compared with capabilities of other (countries)," he said.

"This is part of the government's efforts to strengthen security measures as we prepare to launch activities under the visa liberalisation plan, with surveillance reports issued on a regular basis.

"The visa liberalisation plan will be strengthened with security and enforcement measures that will involve relevant agencies, to curb the influx of foreigners and illegal immigrants.

"The Home Ministry, through the Immigration Department and police, will continue to maintain security and public safety by screening all travellers, especially