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Wisma Putra: Top two Malaysian diplomats sent home due to shortcomings during PM's UAE visit

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PUTRAJAYA: The top two Malaysian diplomats in the United Arab Emirates were ordered to go home as they failed to coordinate administrative and logistic matters during the Prime Minister's visit to the country recently.

Wisma Putra explained that the Malaysian Ambassador to the UAE, as well as the consul-general in Dubai, failed to handle tasks as per standard operating procedure for high-ranking visits overseas, especially during Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob's arrival in Dubai on March 29.

"The failure had resulted in the Prime Minister having to wait long at the arrival hall for passport and Immigration clearance.

"Also, there was no security coverage such as motorcade movements that should be provided for the Prime Minister as per usual SOP practice," it said in a statement on Monday (April 11).

The Foreign Ministry's statement on the matter came following a report published by a news portal stating that two senior diplomats in the UAE were ordered home for the lack of official "guest status" for the Prime Minister's visit to UAE recently.

The statement said it is common practice for Malaysia's head of mission abroad to provide security coverage and a motorcade for the Prime Minister during a visit.

It pointed out that such was the case when the Prime Minister attended the United Nations general assembly in New York where the host government does not provide "guest status".

“The two diplomats had also failed to inform the ministry about the World Government Summit (WGS), which was held during the Dubai Expo. Wisma Putra leadership only knew about the summit on March 30 through a different source.

“Should we have been informed of the summit, certainly efforts would have been made so that the Prime Minister could deliver a speech at the programme,” it said.

The ministry said the Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Abdullah had met UAE State Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Reem Ebrahim Al Hashimy on March 30 and through the meeting, Ismail Sabri was invited to attend the WGS closing later the same day.

“This problem would not have occurred if coordination was made earlier. This is because the UAE government had prepared all facilities for the Prime Minister as head of government right till the end of his visit,” it said.

It pointed out that the UAE government had arranged for a static guard of honour at the Al Maktoum International Airport on the day Ismail Sabri departed from Dubai and that the State Minister of Artificial Intelligence, Digital Economy and Remote Work Omar bin Sultan Al Olama was present to represent his government.

“The move to call back the two officials is nothing out of the ordinary and was done through discussions with all parties, including the Public Service Department.

“It was taken to protect interests in bilateral relations between Malaysia and the said countries and to ensure the competency of the public service,” it said.

During his visit to Dubai from March 27 to 31, Ismail Sabri attended the closing ceremony of the Malaysia Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai and witnessed the signing of several memoranda of understanding between Malaysian corporations and international companies.

The Prime Minister also held a meeting with the Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum.