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Malaysia sent home top two diplomats in UAE due to issues during PM Ismail's visit



Malaysian Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob leaving Dubai on March 31, 2022. PHOTO: ISMAIL SABRI YAAKOB/FACEBOOK

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PUTRAJAYA (THE STAR/ASIA NEWS NETWORK) - Malaysia's top two diplomats in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were ordered home as they failed to coordinate administrative and logistic matters during the Prime Minister's visit to the Middle Eastern country recently.

Malaysia's Foreign Ministry, Wisma Putra, said the Malaysian Ambassador to the UAE as well as the Consul-General in Dubai failed to handle standard tasks 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 for a long time 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 the usual standard practice for visiting dignitaries, Wisma Putra said in a statement on Monday (April 11).

The ministry's statement followed a report published by an online news site that two senior diplomats in the UAE were ordered home due to the lack of official "guest status" for PM Ismail's visit to UAE.

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

Wisma Putra pointed out Mr Ismail was provided with security and a motorcade when he attended the United Nations general assembly in New York recently where the host government did not provide him with "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 Malaysia's Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah had met the UAE State Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Reem Ebrahim Al Hashimy on March 30 and was told that PM Ismail 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.

Malaysian Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob speaking to Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE, at the World Government Summit. PHOTO: ISMAIL SABRI YAAKOB/FACEBOOK

It pointed out that the UAE government had arranged for a static guard of honour at the Al Maktoum International Airport on the day Mr Ismail 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, Mr Ismail 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.