

## TOP NEWS

# Three syndicates behind trafficking of Bangladeshis

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**P**ETALING JAYA — Three syndicates, each with a specialised role, are the prime movers behind the trafficking of Bangladeshi nationals into the country, said the Deputy Inspector-General of Police.

The revelation comes after the Home Ministry “proactively” transferred over 600 Immigration officers, some suspected of links to syndicates, from their posts in Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA).

Tan Sri Noor Rashid Ibrahim yesterday explained one of the three syndicates

operates out of Bangladesh, and is responsible for identifying suitable candidates to be smuggled into Malaysia.

The second syndicate handles the logistics for the candidates’ entry into the country.

“They try and arrange to get the foreigner into the country, through any means possible, be it working with other syndicates, or bribing officers manning the borders,” he said at the launch of the Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar equestrian endurance competition in University Putra Malaysia yesterday.

“We found some foreigners came into Malaysia without stamping their passports, while some overstayed their permitted period and only leave once they are caught,” he said.

The third syndicate is responsible for receiving and placing the smuggled Bangladeshi nationals here.

Together, the three groups cover all the bases in the extensive smuggling network, from recruitment, logistics and transportation, to the corralling of the trafficked victims here.

“Our team identified several Bangladeshi nationals involved, so there is no denying the trafficking is a collaborative effort of syndicates in both countries,” he said.

Noor Rashid said police have been monitoring the activity for over a year to identify how the syndicates operate.

One method was to bring the migrant workers on social passes, after which they would overstay until caught.

He said the monitoring would continue for as long as it took to crack the syndicates’ operations.

“There are no new arrests yet, but there are syndicate members we are looking to arrest,” he said.

On Friday, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the transfer of hundreds of officers was a proactive step to maintain the department’s reputation while authorities worked to dismantle the syndicates involved.

He said about 40 per cent of the departments 1,500 personnel were transferred following the discovery of the smuggling syndicate.

Seven people including four Immigration officers have been arrested over the organised people smuggling.