

Review to stop illegal wildlife trade

BENTONG: The Transport Ministry will review its transshipment procedures in a bid to curb the illegal wildlife trade, its minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said.

“We support Hong Kong’s seizure of illegal elephant ivory because we won’t allow this sort of illegal activity to go through our port,” he said after attending a Hari Raya celebration at Felda Sungai Kemahal.

He was commenting on Hong Kong Custom’s seizure of 7.2 tonnes of tusks, valued at about HK\$72mil (RM40mil), in a 12.19m (40ft) container shipped from Malaysia on Tuesday.

Liow said all shipments destined to enter the country were screened thoroughly but only random checks were conducted on transshipments. “Definitely we’ll look through the procedures again,” he said.

He said the ministry had previously strengthened the transshipment policy to enable authorities to keep better tabs on goods entering its ports. “I suspect there is manipulation of the (customs) manifest,” he said.

Illegal wildlife trade watchdog Traffic South-East Asia acting regional director Kanitha Krishnasamy said smugglers could be shifting to seaports due to several seizures of trafficked wildlife at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

“The onus to end Malaysia’s reputation as an illegal trade hub falls not only on enforcement agencies but also port and airport authorities, logistics providers and the Transport Ministry.

“The fact that these shipments were being identified and searched as a result of risk assessments should show port and airport authorities how serious the situation is for Malaysia,” she said.

Liow said he organises celebrations at every village in his constituency during Hari Raya and this year’s will continue until July 25.