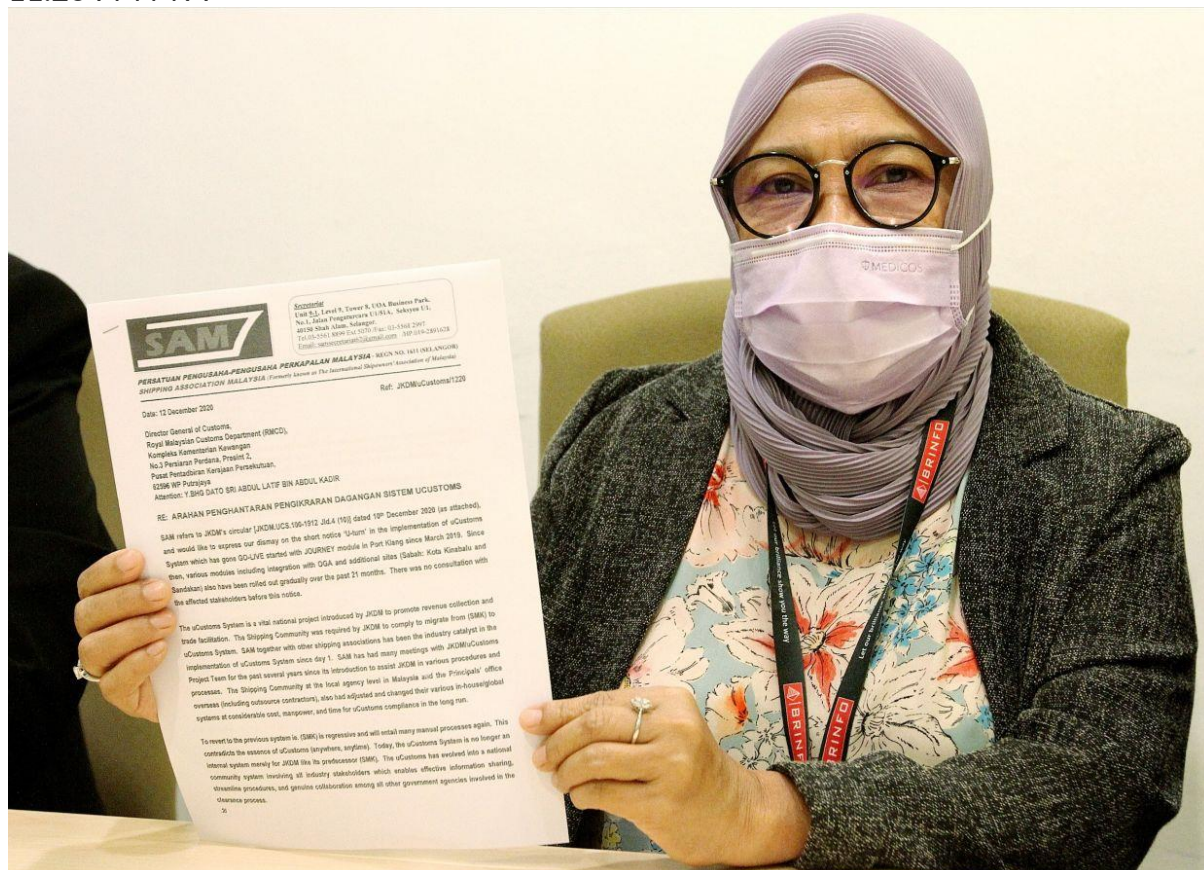


uCustoms system did kick-off, helped govt collect RM200mil in duties, says IT vendor

By [JOSEPH KAOS JR](#)
[NATION](#)

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KUALA LUMPUR: The uCustoms project, which was revealed to be incomplete in the Auditor-General's (AG's) Report 2019 (Series 2), had actually started in Port Klang and Sabah, claims the IT company behind the system.

Brilliance Information Sdn Bhd director Asmar Haiza Ishak (*pic*) said the uCustoms system, which was developed for the Customs Department, had been in operation and managed to collect millions of ringgit in duties. Asmar said the findings of the AG's 2019 report, which claimed only 27% of the project had been completed, portrayed a "bad image" of the company.

“The perception that the uCustoms system failed is not accurate.”

“Statements by certain parties that only 27% of the project was completed despite RM272mil in payments has painted a bad image of our company, which has been a longtime IT vendor in the industry.

“The Shipping Association Malaysia (SAM) was using the uCustoms system in Port Klang and they had expressed dismay when the Customs Department decided to stop using it and return to the older system.

“SAM’s letter to the Customs Department on Dec 12, 2020, expressing their disagreement with the shutdown proved that the uCustoms system had been in operation since 2019.

“The system has also managed to collect a revenue of RM200mil in duties for the government,” Asmar said at a press conference held at the company’s office here on Monday (Oct 4).

The uCustoms system was highlighted by the AG’s 2019 Report (Series 2) as a failure and that a RM272mil loss.

The report also found that the project had been extended five times in the space of 86 months.

Asmar said the Auditor-General’s Department had never contacted Brilliance Information for any feedback on the issues raised in the audit report.

“As the main provider for the uCustoms project, we are tasked to provide feedback and detailed clarification to the issues raised in the audit report to help the relevant authorities with their investigations.

“As a director of the company, I would like to stress that we are committed to provide full cooperation to the authorities.

“But claims that uCustoms was a failed project and incurred wastage of government funds are not accurate,” said Asmar.

She said the company is in the midst of compiling documents that will clear the air on the issues raised by the audit report.

She added that the company was also prepared to meet with Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) to respond on the issues.

“We should be given a chance to explain ourselves because this issue has affected our company’s reputation.

“The imagery portrayed in the press due to the reporting of our chief executive’s arrest has also affected the confidence of our customers,” said Asmar.

On whether the company intends to take legal action, Asmar said they will “wait and see” for the time being.

Also with her at the press conference were the company's lawyers Nicholas Mark Pereira and Daljit Singh.

The uCustoms system was a project introduced by the Customs Department to replace an older information system that had been in place since 1995.

The uCustoms system was meant to improve the efficiency of Customs services and commercial institutions through “fast, secure, and customer-friendly” electronic systems.

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