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Having more hauliers not the answer: Mirzan

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OPENING up the container haulage industry to include more hauliers will not solve the problems currently facing the industry, Container Hauliers Association of Malaysia (CHAM) president Encik Mirzan Mahathir said yesterday.

"That (the increase in the number of hauliers) will not necessarily solve the problem ... the issue is how to be effective and provide an efficient service," Mirzan said after the association's 7th annual and extraordinary general meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

"It is a capital-intensive industry and it requires a strong commitment from hauliers rather than an opportunistic approach," he said.

The existing five hauliers have been in the business for a long time and bringing in more could result in even more problems, such as price undercutting because they need business.

This, Mirzan said, is not good for reinvestment in the industry, and is therefore very disruptive.

Currently the five haulage companies are Kontena Nasional, Konsortium Perkapalan Bhd, Shapadu Kontena, MISC Haulage and Multimodal Freight, all of which are members of CHAM.

Among the complaints and grouses often directed at the container haulage industry are the poor services provided and the delays in cargo transportation, thus causing congestion at the ports.

"It is important to work together with us to identify and solve these operational problems, and we are working very hard to resolve this. It's a two-way thing," he said, quickly adding "we have never said we are perfect, as we have to improve ourselves too."

There are many issues which have to be looked into and solved, he said, referring to the many reasons why cargo could be held up at the port. Offering one reason, he said consignees could deliberately delay the receiving of containers in order to get a tax advantage.

As such, merely increasing the numbers in the market will not help the issue, as the overall objective is not met that way. He added that standards were kept high because of keen competition and that most of their clients were served well.

"We will continue to work closely with others in the logistics chain. It is not as simple as it looks because of the many components involved in the chain. We have to interact in a way that is beneficial to the consignees."

In this respect, freight forwarders may be invited to join CHAM's monthly meetings in a bid to iron out any problems the two groups may have. Mirzan said at the last such meeting, the two parties had come to the conclusion that more interaction and communication were needed in order to resolve problems quickly instead of blaming and pointing fingers at each other whenever there is delay and congestion.

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